

# P.S.

*a lively look at your past and promise*

June 1966/sixty cents




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*The Audience / by William Redfield*  
*Is Dead*

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*The Guys In The / by William F. Nolan*  
*Trick Suits*

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*Tear Off A / by Ron Coulart*  
*Box Top*

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also:  
*William Tenn / Gerald Carson /*  
*Nicholas Breckenridge*

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## THE STUDENT REBEL: THEN AND NOW



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# P.S.

*a lively look at your past and promise*

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The first issue of P.S. has drawn both praises and complaints, and we are grateful for both. The praises have given us the morale to proceed, and the complaints have informed us how we might improve that procedure. All your comments, whatever their nature, are both welcome and influential.



We have made several changes in the magazine, some obvious, and some not so obvious, but all, we hope, for the better.

For one thing, while we're continuing our scatter-shot approach, printing widely diverse articles by widely diverse authors, we've decided to devote a section in each issue to one theme or subject. Our two articles on the student rebel are a beginning step in that direction. In future issues we intend to expand on this idea, having a variety of observers and practitioners commenting on some particular aspect of what we've been through and what it's done to us.



We have also decided, and high time, to print cartoons. We think it makes a bright addition, and we hope that you laugh with them as much as we did.

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in this issue:



"I solemnly swear not to support the government of the United States in any war which it may undertake." This was the Oxford Pledge of 1934, a statement which might easily be echoed by today's young radicals. Yet there are striking differences between the Student Left of the 30's and that of the 60's. William Tenn's perceptive treatment of "The Student Rebel: Then and Now" is well worth your attention. Mr. Tenn is a contributor to *Playboy* and *Esquire* (among many others), and he has just finished a novel—working title: OF MEN AND MONSTERS.

If there is one perennial on the American campus, it is surely the college prankster. The object of his protest is not always clear, but for pure ingenuity he can't be beat. Gahan Wilson and Evan Phillips inspect The Veterans of *Future Wars* and other inventive and pointed pranksters in "It Only Hurts When They Laugh."



John M. Hurdy writes: "Walk-ons in pictures and TV have helped to pay for college, the good life and several magnificent disasters, including an attempted cattle ranch in California's gold country." Further evidence of Mr. Hurdy's affection for magnificent disasters appears on page 12, in his colorful canvas of fire fighting before the turn of the century.



William Redfield made his Broadway debut (at the age of nine) in "Swing Your Lady" in 1936. More recently he has appeared in "A Man For All Seasons" and the Burton-Gielgud production of "Hamlet." His notices, we trust, were better than those he gives here to the theatre audience ("The Audience Is Dead," page 20). Mr. Redfield's new book, *LETTERS FROM AN ACTOR* will soon be published by The Viking Press.



William F. Nolan has excellent credentials for writing about comic books (page 26) since his first professional writing was for them. Since then, Nolan has had 275 magazine pieces (*Playboy*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Road & Track*, etc.) and eleven books to his credit. His greatest character, he says, was conceived at age eleven and called "The Flaming Schrab." (H-Holey Moley!) The "Schrab" never saw the light of print, thus relieving comic-book historians of an impossible burden.

If you've ever addressed anything to Checkerboard Square, St. Louis or Battle Creek, Michigan, you're sure to enjoy Ron Goulart's funny and evocative article on premiums (page 34). Readers will be relieved to learn that we resisted the temptation to run the whole thing in Captain Midnight's Secret Squadron Code.



Gerald Carson has long been a student of American manners and has written for *American Heritage*, *Panorama*, and others. Mr. Carson's article here on "the four hundred" and, in particular, the development of society reportage (page 48) is from his latest book, *THE POLITE AMERICANS*, to be published this Spring by Morrow.

Nicholas Breckenridge recollects the resiliency of commercial art during the depression on page 42, Robert Thomsen tests our memory of the Forties on page 66, and S. Harris offers a quartet of staggering discoveries on page 39.

*From barricades to sit-ins—"To build a new world for all."*

# THE STUDENT REBEL: THEN AND NOW

*by William Tenn*

THE Berkeley campus of the University of California was still recovering from the 1964 Free Speech Strike which had paralyzed all administrative activity and resulted in over 800 arrests. College presidents across the country were telling their wives: "One thing, I'm glad I'm not in Clark Kerr's shoes." But that's where President Buell G. Gallagher of New York's City College found himself. In Clark Kerr's shoes. A group of demonstrators from City College's Progressive Labor Club showed up in front of his office and began a sit-in. Disdaining the



use of such normal counter-measures as the police force or campus security guards, Gallagher opened his door and proceeded to sit-in with the demonstrators. This appalled them and they protested vigorously. His place, they insisted, was on the other side of the door, with the college "Establishment." He had absolutely no right to sit-in on their sit-in.

Heedless of the proprieties, Gallagher went further. With his arms locked around his knees, he called for a discussion of every issue involved in the sit-in. The student demonstrators refused. Thereupon, Gallagher raised the question of Free Speech. He was still holding forth on his rights when the demonstrators rose and, dusting off their knees and the seats of their pants, departed, bitterly denouncing college presidents who did not know how to behave when they were being demonstrated against.

Gallagher might have had a more difficult time had he been president of the college thirty years ago. City College then was what David Boroff has called the "Holy City of Radicalism" and was full to the overflowing with politically alert, verbally agile students who asked no more of life than to be confronted with a temporarily captive representative of the administration.

The usual altercation between students and president involved some degree of violence. On Charter Day in 1933, an ROTC parade being led by City's President Frederick B. Robinson was disrupted by a counter-parade of college pacifists. Robinson flew into a rage. He had an umbrella in his hand, and he used it. Exactly how he used it depends on your point of view and on which authorities you consult. Robinson said he merely waved it. Bystanders remember that he waved it quite threateningly. Students who were in the pacifist demonstration swear to this day that he banged their heads with it.

After another riot (caused by inviting students from Fascist Italy to speak at the most leftist campus in the United States), Robinson told the press that such troubles were caused only by "guttersnipes." Immediately, buttons bearing the legend, "I am a guttersnipe," bloomed on lapels all over City College. Peace strikes at City enlarged to 4,000 participants. And to the end of his tenure, the President of C.C.N.Y. was known as "Umbrella" Robinson. He was not a very happy man.

Between him and Buell Gallagher lies much more than the gulf of personality or the mere lapse of thirty years. There is a startling geographical shift, for one thing, in the Student Left's center of gravity, moving it outside



New York and to places which once looked to New York for programs and directives. Policy which in the past was made in the alcoves of C.C.N.Y. and Brooklyn College as well as the dingy "headquarters" lofts immediately south of Union Square—this policy is formulated now in Negro colleges in Georgia and Tennessee, while new ideas, new styles in protest ferment and are decanted at the Universities of Wisconsin and California.

There are other gulfs, other lapses. "A generation is missing in the life of American radicalism," Irving Howe mourns, "the generation that would now be in its mid-thirties, the generation that did not show up. The result is an inordinate difficulty in communication between the young radicals and those unfortunate enough to have reached— or, God help us, even gone beyond—the age of forty."

Whether it was frozen out by the Cold War of the late Forties or burned out by the witch trials of the early Fifties, this missing generation is responsible for a significant gap in the cultural continuity of the Left. It is as if there had been no Jacksonian period between Jefferson and Lincoln, or no Milton to connect the Elizabethans with Dryden and Pope. The radicals of the Thirties, numerous and influential as they were, have no interpret-

ers that are truly acceptable to the young radicals of today. Their songs are forgotten—

*Gonna pick up my hammer and scythe,  
Join hands with the workers bands,  
Join hands with the workers bands,  
Join hands with the workers bands,  
Gonna pick up my hammer and scythe,  
Join hands with the workers bands  
To build a new world for all!*

—and the peculiar quality of the time in which they sang is now almost impossible to reconstruct.

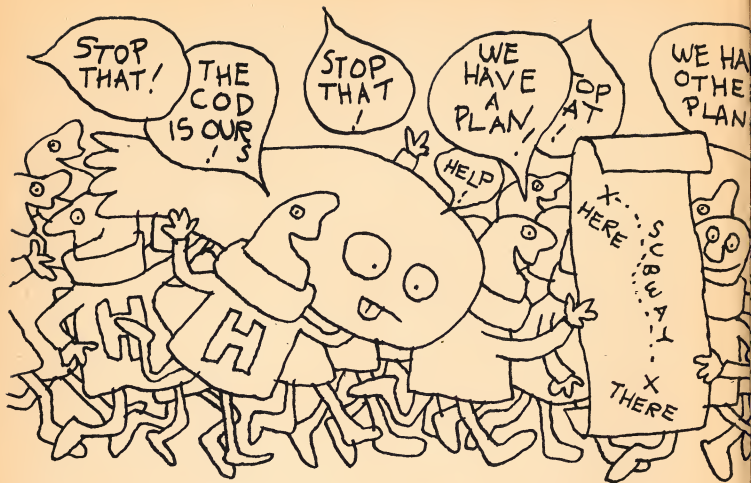
But in Asia, in Africa, in South America, people, and especially students, are still forced by circumstances to think along the same lines as men did in the America of the Thirties. And a graduate radical of that period recently waved with disdain at the glittering automobiles, well-dressed people and ornate storefronts which surrounded him. "A gingerbread world," he said. "The one we knew in the Thirties was maybe unpleasant, maybe uncertain, but it was thoroughly real every single day. This is pure gingerbread—not to be taken seriously."

How unpleasant, how uncertain? It was a world of substantial economic privation for most people—one in four of the available labor force unemployed at its worst, one in five at its best. It was a world of hunger marches, of wholesale household evictions, of foreclosed farms, of abruptly failed banks. It was a world where if you were relatively affluent you heard jokes about partners in a bankrupt stockbroking firm leaping to their death hand in hand, and if you were not so affluent you heard whispered stories about how Mr. So-and-so in Apartment 4B had been laid off two months ago and since then he and his wife had been sneaking down to the basement late at night to glean the building's garbage for their next day's meals. It was a world where you could walk on a certain block in the heart of the business district and see nothing but "For Rent" signs in the stores, where at least fifty per cent of every grocer's total assets had been tied up in the credit he'd extended, where couples with children moved back in with their parents not because there was a shortage of apartments but because there was an absolute dearth of cash money. Cash money was inordinately precious: if you had two cents and your girl had three cents, you could pool it to buy a cup of coffee and sit all night holding hands in a cafeteria. The manager wouldn't bother you—he wanted you to come back another day with another nickel.

(continued on page 58)



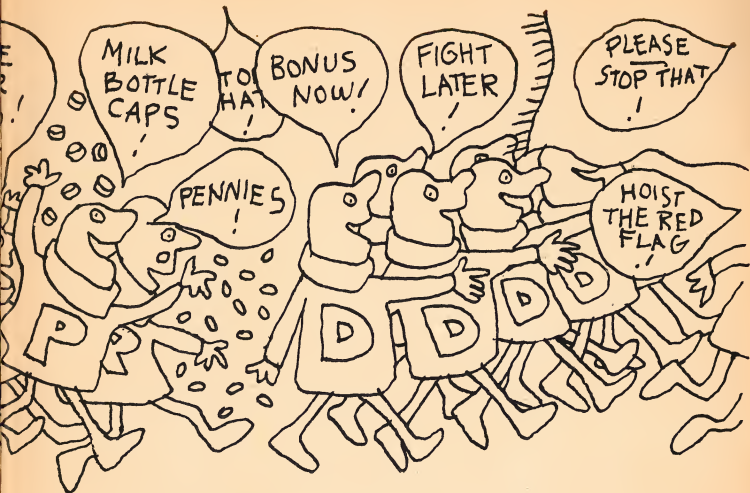




# IT ONLY HURTS WHEN THEY LAUGH

*by Gahan Wilson and Evan Phillips*





### *Rah Rah Radicalism, as practiced by the college prankster*

SOME people want to change the world, others want to embarrass it. Among the latter is the college prankster. That he sometimes does a bit of changing as well is testimony to the influence and flexibility of humor.

For there are pranks, and there are pranks.

In mild and optimistic times they tend to be trivial, if imaginative. They serve mainly to provide fodder for filler items in magazines and news broadcasts. Sometimes, as in the panty raids, they manage to offend our more generously stuffed shirts, but, mainly, they give the pranksters' elders yet another chance to chuckle at and wonder over the absurdities of "those kids."

But in grimmer times the points of the jests are honed sharper, and they sting when they jab.

In the halcyon days of the twenties the pranksters vied with one another as to the number of goldfish they could swallow, or the relative speed with which they could demolish goal posts. But then, very suddenly, the depression occurred, and the triviality of these diversions became bleakly apparent. People were starving out there, and a lot of extremely serious questions were being raised.

The more sober-minded of the student body dropped their prankishness altogether and took to forming extraordinarily earnest political groups which alternated between debating fine theoretical points among themselves and plotting revolution. Others, not necessarily less serious in their intentions, continued their pranks. But they began to use them as weapons.

In 1930 the editors of the Cornell *Sun* sent letters to Republican Party chieftains throughout the length and breadth of our great land inviting them to attend a dinner commemorating the sesquicentennial of Hugo N. Frye. Frye, the invitation reminded the recipient, was the founder of the Republican Party of the State of New York.

An event of this magnitude comes rarely and is worthy of comment. Their memories of Frye refreshed, the sages of the Grand Old Party responded handsomely.

The Vice President of the United States, Charles Curtis, telegraphed a response at once: "I congratulate Republicans on paying respect to the memory of Hugo N. Frye, and wish you a most successful occasion."

This from representative Ruth Pratt: "Greetings and

good wishes to you who are gathered to pay tribute to the memory of Hugo N. Frye."

Probably the most moving communication was that received from Secretary of Labor Davis: "It is a pleasure to testify to the career of that sturdy patriot who first planted the ideals of our party in this region of the country. Were he living today, he would be the first to rejoice that our government is still in the hands of the people."

It was soon after this that the unkind editors of the *Sun* admitted that there had never, ever been a Hugo N. Frye. They archly pointed out that his name was a phonetic dead ringer for a dismissive, insult then much in favor amongst collegians: "You go and fry."

The government, in an attempt to secure funds for the relief of the ever-expanding population of the poor, had hit upon the device of enlarging hidden taxes. This artifice was hardly a new departure, a variant of it as applied to tea having already led to a war between ourselves and the British, but it had never been expanded quite so drastically before. Some complained that the technique, raising the price of cigarettes, clothing, housing and the like, soaked most of all the people who could afford it the least.

The citizens of Troy and Rensselaer in Upstate New York began to notice an odd phenomenon. Their pennies were dwindling. It wasn't that the actual amount of money had dropped, it was just that, day by day, there were less and less of the humble coins to be had. The citizens were, understandably, puzzled.

Then the students of Rensselaer Polytechnic appeared, bearing great sacks stuffed full with pennies and, using the things exclusively, began to make lavish purchases in the town's shops. When merchants complained at the awkward piles of coins in growing stacks at either side of their cashboxes, the students explained that the pennies represented hidden taxes. The carefully hoarded and then suddenly released flood of copper counters was enough to demonstrate dramatically to the dullest taxee how those tiny tariffs filched from their pockets could add up.

The government devised all kinds of interesting, and sometimes humiliating, ways to give the profits of the hidden tax back to the poor from which so much of it had come, but they never gave a college try to an unusual and intriguing plan of financial aid which had been devised by students of the University of California. It seems a pity they didn't, for if they had they would never have needed to tax anybody in the first place.

The plan was based on old paper milk bottle caps. The sponsors explained that each cap was to be assigned the value of \$1.00, and that weekly pension payments would be made with them. Every time a bottle cap changed hands, the receiver would be required to punch a hole in it. "Thus the cap would be self-liquidating," proponents of the scheme argued. "By the time one had changed hands 100 times, it would have done away with itself, as well as paid for itself."

Now and then, in those pressing times, the students

were forced to abandon plans for the betterment of their fellow man and take up the cudgels for themselves. They were generally very good at it.

The inhabitants of the attractive town of Hanover, New Hampshire, as deep in the throes of the depression as anyone else, pondered long and hard on how to increase the amount of money in the civic coffers and then hit on what they thought was a dandy scheme: they would levy a poll tax on the students of Dartmouth College, which was located within the environs of the town. They passed a law at the annual meeting to that effect and congratulated themselves on their fiscal ingenuity.

They were not so happy at the next annual meeting, for the Dartmouth students turned up *en masse* and the Hanoverians were dismayed to find that their scholarly neighbors outnumbered them easily.

Taking advantage of the democratic process, the Dartmouth voters proposed and passed two unusual public works programs. The first was the erection of a new town hall. The building was to be an inch square and would rise a mile high. The second was architecturally more feasible, but hardly less pleasing to the embattled townfolk. It was the construction of a canopied sidewalk which would run from Hanover to Colby Junior College, a girls' educational establishment some forty miles distant.

On the occasion of the next annual meeting, the Dartmouth bloc appeared again, and again outnumbered the apprehensive locals. This time they put on the books two more works programs. They were not quite as surrealistic as the previous duo, but they promised to be considerably more expensive. The first was a working subway which was to run from Hanover to Smith College, a repository of females; and the second was an eight-lane highway which was to make access to Skidmore, where more women dwelt, an easier proposition than heretofore.

The Hanoverians bowed to the inevitable. They humbly petitioned the state legislature to ignore these imaginative ordinances and the poll tax on the students was dropped summarily.

One effect of the depression, not its least, was to undermine the confidence of Americans in the solidarity of their country, and this did not exclude its legislators. The Russians had executed their revolution, and there was great fear that some such sort of thing was very likely to happen here. Dread turned to fear and fear turned to panic and excessive precautions were taken.

One such precaution was a peculiar law passed in Massachusetts to the effect that the hoisting of a red flag by anyone anywhere in the state was an offense against the said state and, as such, was punishable. The thinking behind this legislation couldn't have been overly logical. One has the vision of a smoking, pock-marked Massachusetts taken over by Communists afraid to raise their flag because of a ruling passed by freshly-slaughtered law makers.

The greatest error in this bit of whimsey was, however,



not that it was unlikely to discourage successful revolutionists from flaunting their standard in triumph, but that its wording was such that it made public display of the Harvard Crimson illegal. That did not set well with the student body. They arranged to revenge themselves.

Their most famous exploit was, without doubt, the planting of a red flag atop the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. They did it by stealth at night, and they fixed it to the structure so securely that the thing had to be burnt off with torches. It raised a tremendous howl from the press, and must have been a source of great satisfaction to the participants, but, pleasurable as this particular antic may have been, it lacked the esthetic roundness of the affair of the Sacred Cod.

Until April, 1933, the Sacred Cod had rested, undisturbed and revered, on the wall of the State House in Boston. Its metallic splendor, and maybe something about the expression in its eyes, was a source of encouragement and reaffirmation to all the proper Bostonians who gazed upon it. Every inch of its six feet spoke eloquently of the traditions of Yankee commerce and veneration for history which would yet bring the Bay State through the present unpleasantness into a new era of prosperity.

Imagine, then, the public consternation which occurred when the monster vanished. Some thief, or thieves, unknown, had plucked the fish from its accustomed resting place, while the city slept, and spirited it away. The hue and cry was deafening.

Police combed the state in a bloodhound frenzy, but to no avail. Search as they would, they could uncover no trace of the ancient sea beast. Then, at the very white heat of this investigation, a telegram was received which announced that the flag which flapped in front of the State House would soon join the Sacred Cod in mysterious oblivion.

The area was saturated with peace officers, some standing visible in blue, others deftly concealed amongst the cracks and crannies of the hallowed New England architecture. This was no time to scrimp on security, and the authorities were lavish with their guardians.

Unhappily, this concentration of constabulary was exactly what the diabolical plotters had counted upon, for while the State House was now impregnable protected by the law, the true target, namely the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, went unobserved. At least long enough to allow the raising of a red flag on its pole.

The real purpose of the fiendish scheme having been achieved, the Machiavellian gamblers went on to add artistic little touches.

A tip was given to the now apoplectic *gendarmierie* that the Sacred Cod was hidden in a crate which could be located in the basement of one of the buildings of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is diverting to imagine the searchers mounting frustration as they opened various containers of scientific equipment, books, and other educational bric-a-brac, growing dustier as they

probed deeper. At length they found a crate which contained one lonely sardine and surmised, no doubt correctly, that this was the point of the joke. It's doubtful that there was much hilarity amongst those present at the disclosure.

There were other attractive flourishes, such as a counterfeit Cod discovered dangling from the roof of the Lowell House in Cambridge and an elegantly solemn article in the Harvard *Lampoon* soberly offering a huge reward to whomever might recover the elusive creature. Then they wound the business up in the best James Cagney tradition by dumping the Sacred Cod from a speeding car into the arms of a startled Middlesex Park policeman.

Princeton's contribution to the art of pointed pranksterism was a credit to that institution. The student body formed an organization calling itself the Veterans of Future Wars, or V.F.W. The first official action of this body was to demand a bonus of one thousand dollars. They reasoned that if they were to get payment for fighting for their country, they would rather have it before they ventured into the actual engagement and, thereby, be able to spend it while they were still alive, unmaimed, and capable of enjoying it to the full. Their salute was described as "hand outstretched, palm up, expectant."

The Veterans of Future Wars soon acquired a feminine auxiliary, the Home-Side Division, and together they staged large parades. Their banner was a flag showing a death's-head and a slogan: THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME. Some might carp at this, but it was probably necessary. Duller observers might otherwise have missed the point that the joke was a grim one.

The American Legion denounced the Veterans of Future Wars as a bunch of mocking and scoffing yellow bellies, whose aim was to discredit honorable military service. But Princetonian Lewis J. Gorin, founder of the movement and a fellow whom a contemporary journalist described as "enigmatic" disclaimed any such intentions. "We merely want our bonuses," he stated.

In spite of the American Legion's disapproval, the V. F. W. found many ardent supporters, and branches were formed on campuses across the land. It is a pity that the V. F. W. has been disbanded.

It is a pity, too, that pranksterism as a serious political weapon seems to have been largely abandoned. Outside of a few brief flashes, such as the employment of four letter words in the free speech battle at Berkeley, the use of humor by protesting students is conspicuous in its absence.

It is difficult to understand why such a potent technique has been so far unemployed. Surely the most obvious thing about the K.K.K. and the John Birch society is that they are grotesquely open to ridicule. And if your complaint is that society is behaving absurdly, what better way to demonstrate the fact than by pushing it to extremes with a prank?

But perhaps we are being too serious.

# The Fabulous

THERE was a time in this country—and not too long ago at that—when the cry of Fire! tugged at mens' hearts and caused them to drop whatever activity at hand and plunge into a raucous, pell-mell race that often caused more damage and injury than the fire itself. These were the days of the volunteer fire company, before organized fire departments as we now know them.

As soon as horn, siren and bell clamored the alarm, the race was on. Members and friends of the volunteer companies dashed to their respective engine houses, where they grabbed the tow lines attached to their beloved machine and began hauling her into action. The company's foreman, yelling through his trumpet to make himself heard over the racket of bells, clattering wheels and shouting, urged his men to top speed.

For a volunteer fire company, "being passed" on the way to a blaze was a social humiliation to be feared more than explosions or toppling walls. Plans to pass a rival engine were carefully laid in advance. On the big day, the enemy company would watch in fury while fresh reserves sprang out from nowhere to help the scheming regulars drag their machine to the head of the chase.

Ambition overcame courtesy in these races, as the runners leaped their engine over the curbs of the gutted roads to better their time on board sidewalks. Did they knock down a few ladies? "Sorry, ma'am," they'd grunt without breaking stride. Did they splatter mud on a dandy's clothes? No apologies were deemed necessary. The tamer citizens flooded the local mayor's offices with demands that the rambunctious volunteers be restrained. What could be done? Mud cleans off and ruffled feathers smooth 'out, but a gutted section of town meant long, expensive rebuilding.

The demands made upon themselves by the volunteers were even more trying. It is told of Frank Clark, foreman of the Old Turks Company, that hours after his marriage ceremony, when he and his bride were within arm's reach of the front door to their new home, the fire alarm rang. Clark abandoned his wife on the spot in favor of the Old Turks' machine. Mrs. Clark, not yet in possession of house or key, had to go home to Mama. Three days later, her bridegroom returned and explained, "What was a feller goin' to do? Let the old gal get passed?"

Firemen were affectionately known as sparks. As their



*Fun and games amidst the flames*

# Freebie Fire Fighters

*by John Major Hurdy*

engine careened over the wooden planks, its audience, wild with excitement and hooting encouragement, ran along side. Self-appointed scouts darted off from the gathering crowd to spot the actual location of the fire. In spite of crowds and confusion, bad advice, spills and waylaying enemies, most of the volunteers usually reached the site of the blaze.

Those who made it could count on a grand go. Nineteenth century buildings were generally timber fire traps which exploded into an orgy of flames. When the walls fell, spurts of embers and blazing wood sailed up the currents of hot air and showered down on the dry shingle roofs of neighboring houses. The men fought back with hook, ladder, hose and bomb until the inferno had roared its last, the building's walls had burned up or been pulled down and all that was left of the flaming glory was a stink of smoldering ashes. Then audience and participants streamed toward their favorite tavern to discuss—like theater goers—this latest performance.

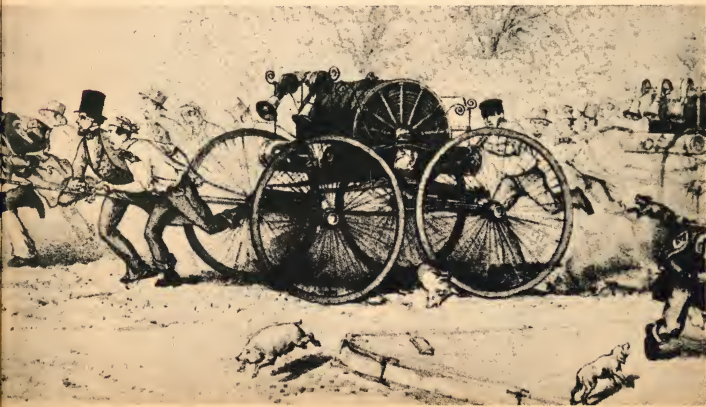
New York Chief Fire Engineer Alfred Carson regularly and vainly inveighed against this state of events. In 1850, he complained bitterly that the honor of being first at the

flames so obsessed the volunteer companies that "they notoriously went about, destroying the apparatus and often, by stratagem, putting certain members against each other and creating endless broil and confusion in the department."

Carson had other complaints. He reported how the Old Maid's Boys, "a fearful and deadly club," captured Hose No. 26 before it could reach the blaze, directed its spray at their competitors, turned over their carriage and set off a general melee of fisticuffs.

A few years later, a hundred rivals lay in wait for the fleet footed members of Lafayette Engine Company No. 19 as they raced their machine to a fire, a certainty to add yet another victory to their record. The ambush turned the race into a complete rout. Stones, bricks and bats broke bones, barked shins and cracked skulls as the proud Lafayette was put to flight. The engine was rolled down in the gutter, its costly sides stove in and its ornately painted panels scorched with torches. To the great delight of its many competitors, the Lafayette company never reached the fire that night.

Illustrious citizens and public figures lionized fire fight-





ing and the rosters of many engine companies read like those of exclusive country clubs. United States engineers, millionaires and merchant-lords vied with each other for the privilege of running with the machines. Claus Spreckles, the sugar king; William Alvord, President of the Bank of California; Cornelius W. Lawrence, Mayor of New York; and William H. Webb, internationally famous ship builder were all active sparks.

To be a volunteer required a fat wallet or a husky set of shoulders—preferably both. The old engines were dragged, pumped and purchased, together with engine house, uniforms and entertainment, by the volunteers themselves.

Heavy, massive machines called "bull engines" were most favored. New York revelled in its Man Killer, which had gone out of control on more than one occasion, crushing its own runners. San Francisco's Monumental No. 6 was priced by a Virginia City, Nevada, volunteer company and purchased for \$4,000. Originally, she'd required 40 men to pump and drag her, but after a clever redesign job, she wouldn't handle with less than a crew of 64.

All possible sources of rivalry between volunteer companies were diligently exploited. The engine's appearance headed the list. In addition to their paint, many of the old gals were gold leafed, silver embossed, waxed, rubbed and augmented. Pine was discarded if oak could be found and oak was replaced with mahogany.

The boys of Pennsylvania Engine Co. No. 12 sent a draft of \$5,000 for the construction of a machine worthy of their dignity and then, fearing their dignity required more, sent an additional sum. The second draft exhausted the maker's ingenuity and he had to send back an inquiry asking how he was expected to spend it. "Convert it into silver or gold and stick it on anywhere," came the reply.

Club funds were lavished on artist's commissions to make the old gal a rolling gallery. In 1850, for the price of almost one thousand dollars, J. Quidor painted the portrait of an Indian chieftain and his squaw against an imposing forest. Frank Clark's Old Turk had the figures of two gigantic Turks, armed with long, curving sabres, carved on its engine box. Its rear pictured a fluffy cloud polkadotted with languid, dusky beauties and in counterpoint, the portrait of a fully clothed American lady hanging above the company's gold lettered motto: "Extinguish one flame and cherish another." The Honey Bee featured Hercules killing the lion, the artist managing to cram into one area the lion, clambering up a horse's back (to the obvious distress of the horse and his lady rider), Hercules to the rescue, a stormy sea, a cloudy sky and a rather pathetic looking bush.

The old Silver Nine, a hose cart belonging to the Silk Stocking Company, was silver plated from its tongue to its springs, and so doted on by its owners that they commissioned artist A.P. "Professor" Moriarty to "go the limit." The limit involved painting the body a well purpled plum color and the running gear a rich chocolate brown, bedazzled with gold, red and white stripes. On one side of the hose reel, two angels guarded an infant. On the opposite side, two sleepy-looking ladies lounged under a clump of trees. Each picture was banded by a silver rim and framed within wood carving which was, in turn, inlaid with gold and silver. The carrier's front was decorated with a silver plate engraved with the name of the

company and the lid of the front box sported this verse embossed in silver:

They who steal our purse steal trash;

But they who basely steal our books, torches, etc.,

Rob us most villainously.

The box in the rear was adorned with a painting of the Firemen's Monument in Greenwood Cemetery and the reassuring slogan "We Cherish Their Memory."

Nevertheless, Amity Company No. 38 beat the Silver Nine's limit by lavishing \$9,500 on the darling of their hearts.

The men felt it necessary to live up to their machines in sartorial elegance. Consequently, the volunteers had two sets of uniforms, their fire fighting clothes and their marching outfit.

The object we all instantly recognize as a fireman's hat evolved partly to protect the men's vulnerable necks from flying cinders and to shield their eyes from the glare of flames and partly in response to a need to distinguish the volunteers from the ever present looters. Such a hat, whose basic material was leather, could cost as little as three or four dollars, but most of the sparks contrived elaborations that ran into the hundreds. One company of volunteers in Sacramento, California presented their foreman with a cap that cost \$2,200.

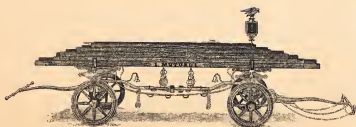
Boots were a must and quickly became standardized. An official badge, often the sole contribution of a grateful, but thrifty, municipal government, completed the working uniform.

The dress uniform was an entirely different matter. Scarlet or lemon yellow shirts, a huge brass buckle clasp—ing a broad black leather belt, plus a handsome pair of suspenders, the latest fashion in black leather boots, and, for the final touch, a bright bit of silk tied carelessly around the neck. Also standard were marching hats, fully eight inches high and embellished with hand painted representations of the old gal or intricately wrought designs that had caught the company's fancy. Embroidered satin banners and silver speaking trumpets completed the company's marching equipment.

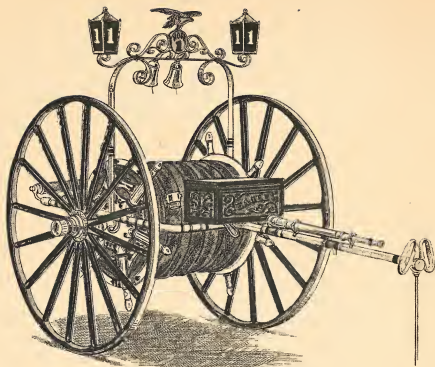
Pumping was the main reason the volunteers were young men's outfits. In reality the "engine" was nothing more than a king-sized pump on wheels. On either side, or either end of her, depending on her make, were long wooden rails or brakes—the pump handles—each requiring a team of six to twenty husky men. Pumping water from its source (usually a near-by well) and through the leaky hose meant pushing the brakes in an arc from above the men's shoulders down to the level of their knees.

Pumping drill was a weekly necessity and the occasion for a good bit of practical joking. Dogs, cats, children and local cranks found themselves being used for target practice. If the town boasted two or more companies, Sunday afternoon drills sometimes broke out in a full scale water fight.

A duel between San Francisco's Monument No. 6 and Vigilant No. 9 in front of the Occidental Hotel on First Street, with half the town present and betting, lasted for hours. Trials I and II were declared inconclusive. During trial III, the Monument's No. 6 emerged winner and was marched back to its house with banners flying and shouts of triumph. The same No. 6 established an all time record at a contest in Sacramento, California, by shooting out a stream of water 229 feet and 8 inches long.







*A hose reel, or "jumper," from the Eagle Hose Company No. 1, New York's first hose company.*

The "engine's" bedecked sides were the direct cause of a strange pumping competition known as "a washing."

Few fires were considerate enough to break out near a convenient supply of water. From the tip of its suction hose that introduced water (from the source) into the machine, and to the nozzle of its leader hose that sent it spurting out, it was a rare machine that measured more than 250 feet long. To get the water to the flames required a chain of old gals, hooked up in a peculiar fashion so that each engine obtained its water from the engine behind it and delivered its load into the engine box of the machine next step in line to the blaze.

Exhausted from their efforts to pass and keep from being passed, the crews began linking up the hose and engine chain as soon as they discovered a likely source of water. They'd urge rival companies into line with the challenge, "Dare you take our water?"

Some of those chains were more than a mile long and no sooner was the last machine in place than the fun began. Each crew pumped as furiously as possible. The goal: to give the machine ahead of them more water than its men could pump out, water enough to overflow the enemy's engine box and slosh down its sides, muddying and water-soiling the costly decorations.

Worse than the financial loss was the disgrace. When one old spark, bedridden with tuberculosis from past exposure to cold and smoke, heard the black news that his company's machine had been washed, he cried out, "Then let me die! I envy not your hold on life!"

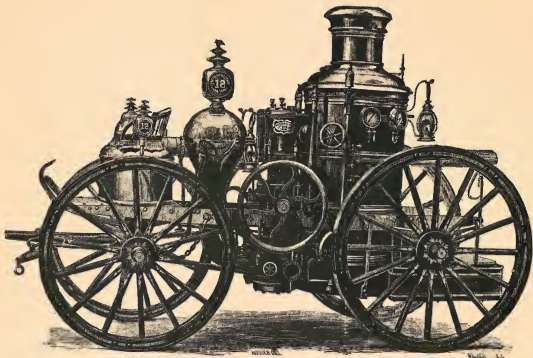
Excuses for being washed were plentiful. Smoke got in one of the team member's lungs. The line was clogged with mud. But excuses were snickered down and all that

was left was hatred and a desperate determination "to get even."

The engine box that had been washed was no longer a "virgin," and the only hope of honor was to deflower the victor's engine box in turn. Feeling was so fierce that a brawl was often the immediate outcome of a washing. The deflowered company attacked on the spot. Fists flew, noses bled, and bodies were struck with anything that came to hand. At the fire end of the chain, water stopped coming out of the nozzle. The fire fighters, from past experience, suspected the cause and sent their relief crews down the line to break up the fight. Sometimes the relief crews succeeded, sometimes they merely increased the number of brawlers. Vendettas resulting from the washings smoldered on for years and invaded the men's private and business lives.

A machine that had kept her virginity year after year became known as an Old Maid. The most famous and popular of the Old Maids in New York was Peterson Engine Company's goosenecked wonder. In her prime, the old gal commanded more runners than any other company in the city. One of her champions, an ex-sailor by the name of Bill Burke, made himself an invincible weapon by stuffing the empty sleeve of the arm he'd lost in the War of 1812 with a big stone. One of the most frequent recipients of fireman Bill's built-in sap was the red head of Mose Humphries, the ferocious brawler of Lady Washington Company No. 40, the Old Maid's chief rival.

Once in the summer of 1836, returning home from a fire, the two companies fell to taunting each other on the probability of a forthcoming washing. The actual



*The steam engine (above) began to replace the hand-pumper in the 1850's.*

fighting began in the Bowery. Lady Washington's Jim Jeroloman, a six foot four inch ship builder who wore earrings dangling almost to his shoulders as part of his fire fighting uniform, jumped for Country McCluskey's throat. This encouraged Mose, already roaring mad, to go for Hen Chanfrau. Then everyone joined in. For more than an hour, a thousand men and boys were gouging, stomping and biting each other in a beautiful exhibition of free form fighting. Country McCluskey butted Jeroloman in the stomach, knocking him down, and followed up by jumping down on him with his boots aimed heel first. Chanfrau was going at Mose fist and foot. When the boys of Lady Washington had been driven away, their machine was dishonored as well as captured by the Old Maid's crew. The Lady Washington Company never completely recovered from the humiliation. The shame forced many of her best men to withdraw from her ranks.

While the men were pumping, the foreman's services were needed to establish the beat and keep their efforts coordinated. He stood on the engine box, feet spread apart for balance, trumpet to his lips, shouting with every ounce of lung power, "Up and down, up and down . . . one, two . . . one, two . . . she feels it, boys, she feels it . . . up and down, up and down . . . make 'er shake, boys, let 'er quiver . . . up and down . . ."

Not only was team work required, so were replacements for the pumps. The faster the beat, the shorter the time even the strongest back could stay at the brakes. Feats of more than a hundred strokes a minute weren't uncommon. At that beat, the ground around the machine was littered with fallen firemen, like fish on land, their eyes bulging, mouths open, gasping for breath.

It was thirsty work. Liquor kegs were standard equipment. Each company had its own steward whose principal task was to see no one stayed dry long. The kind of booze varied with geography. New England ran to rum; New York favored old Holland gin; corn whiskey helped the men keep beat in the hill country; and that great American invention, bourbon, wet the whistles down South.

Winters, the fireman had to spare some of the liquor to pour into his boots so that his feet wouldn't freeze, but even during the coldest months, most of it went down his throat "to proteck the innards." The richer companies bought partitioned kegs to give the fire fighters variety in potables and a few of the kegs were of sufficient left to require their own wheels and runners.

Even during the 1830s, when you could get a good glass of whiskey for two cents and a gallon of brandy cost \$1.50, the volunteers' thirst demanded a steady stream of revenue—which was often raised by fines. W. B. Baker was fined for telling John E. Norris, "You be damned, you damned old Dutch hog!" Joseph Giraud was nipped for failing to attend a conflagration even though he stayed away "because of a severe pain in the face and the necessity of having a Jay Tooth Extracted." John F. Horan was fined twenty-five cents merely because he smoked in meeting. And on January 15, 1807, despite the compelling excuse that "at the time of the Fire he was lock'd in Some One's Arms & could not hear the Alarm," Harris Sage was forced to empty his purse. On the other hand, rules could be stretched. The boys of Eagle Hose Company No. 1 were not fined for refusing to connect up their hose until they had finished eating their hot mutton pies. Because of their elegance and rarity, the

mutton pies were declared sufficient justification to grant the boys a temporary delay.

The first hint of modern times augured deceptively well for the volunteers. The conversion of an evil smelling, greenish white sap into an elastic, semi-hard, water-proof substance had been around for some time before a minor genius molded the stuff into the first rubber hose. Before him, hoses were made of riveted leather, and a more jack-trap, make-shift, miserable method of conveying water from here to there can scarcely be imagined. Leather hose required every bit as much attention as a new born babe but lacked his promise of future attainments. Oiled and rubbed, leather still oozed water. Neglected, it leaked like a sieve and generally cracked beyond repair into the bargain. Rubber hoses were house savers and back savers, permitting the men to throw a dousing hundred foot stream without half killing the men pumping the brakes.

It was a false dawn, however, because the next invention that came their way was the steam engine. As long as big shoulders and bulging leg muscles were the best fire insurance a town could have, the volunteers were undisputed kings and could do no wrong. But in 1828 an Englishman applied the principle of steam to the problem of pumping and, though he may not have realized it, destroyed a way of life.

Like John Henry, the volunteers fought steam power with everything they had. They made it a point of honor never to touch a steam pump and never to give their water to the crew that had. They fought so well that time and again cities and townships were forced to abandon the puffing monsters. On July 28, 1848, the Augusta, Georgia, town Council decided by resolution not to allow a steam engine in the city limits "as being too dangerous to property." In 1855 a company of New York volunteers challenged a "steamer" to a public competition. To the great delight of all present, the old hand engine won. Reported a leading metropolitan newspaper at the time, "This 'tremendous squirt' (i.e., the steam engine) is not half the pumpkins it has been cracked up to be."

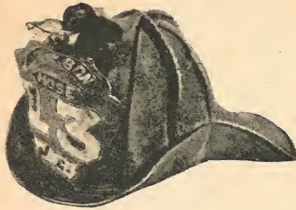
The struggle against steam was a glorious battle, but a hopeless one. Steam doesn't tire; the best muscles do.

By 1865 manufacturing steam engine fire trucks was a mushrooming business. Big factories, little factories, garages-turned-into-factories were all putting the steamers into the hands of local governments. In one skirmish after another, steam pushed the volunteers off the fire fighting lines.

In San Francisco the paid fire department took over at midnight, Sunday, December 2, 1866. One company sounded a false alarm to give the boys a good-bye run with their engines. Afterwards a proper funeral was held to bury the defunct companies (represented by the stuffed figure of a fireman), complete with lighted candles around the bier, dirges and the reading of the fireman's burial service. After an elaborate supper and many toasts, Tom Sawyer, Bill Tracey and Bill Lowrie marched the Company carriage into the Corporation yard for the last time.

But in a sense, after the volunteers had been steam-rolled under, an awful revenge occurred, one that even their vengeful pride would never have wished for: the great San Francisco and Chicago disasters.

The night the Chicago branch of the McLaughlin clan gave a party for the newest arrival on American soil, there was so much dancing and singing that an awful thirst was raised. Milk was needed to soothe the rough Irish whisky on its way down. For a grand need like that, who would



mind rousing his landlady and begging her to take a second milking of the cow? The landlady, Irish herself and understanding, agreed. But if her heart was warm, her fingers were not and if there's one thing an Irish cow hates, it's to be waked on a drowsy evening by two handful of icy fingers.

As you know, the cow kicked. But you may not know what a bad time it was for kicking.

Chicago was in the throes of a mean dry spell. Flat clouds of blue smoke and an acrid smell told the citizens that just beyond the city limits, the prairie grasses were exploding in spontaneous fires. Worse, a big fire had broken out the day before within the city, sacking the west division and destroying two of the sorely needed steam engines, a ladder truck and a mile of hose.

The new professionals weren't fools or lazy or cowardly. There were just too few of them and too little of the "modern" equipment to handle a real emergency.

The O'Leary barn was located in Shanty Town, a slum consisting of small wooden sheds standing wall to wall or even sharing common walls. There were no bricks or stones to slow the flames down, just thin boards of cheap, dry wood—a giant's kindling pile.

To complete the hopelessness of the situation, and the irony, the new telegraph warning system developed a case of bugs. When the O'Leary barn caught fire, the alarm failed to sound. By the time the smoke was seen at the nearest station, all Shanty Town was ablaze, including wooden St. Paul's Church which had a two story steeple that acted like a match, igniting W. B. Bateham's four story shingle mill situated just behind it.

From then on it was a case of falling dominoes. When the Gas House caught fire, they thought the whole town was going to blow. But Superintendent Tom Burtis risked his life to open the valves to let the gas run out of the storage tanks. After the waterworks burned, Fire Chief

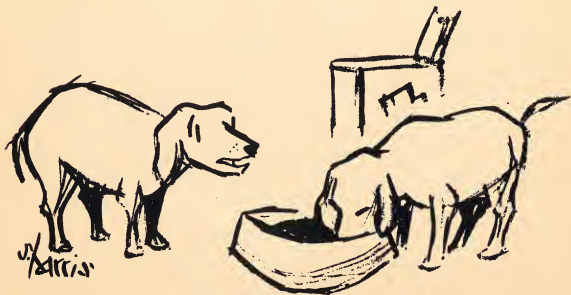
Williams admitted defeat. With no water to fight the fire, his men had to resort to dynamite.

The fire was three days burning. It swept through the city and on to the prairie, burning 2,200 acres and destroying 15,000 residences, 170 factories, 40 churches and 1,700 other buildings. One hundred and ten thousand people were out in the streets. Two hundred and fifty people were dead.

It was a catastrophe that might have been prevented and certainly would have been mitigated if Chicago had been filled with its overflowing, unruly, but well trained, companies of volunteers.

The San Francisco calamity was more of the same. The earthquake destroyed her new water mains, leaving the city in the same, sorry waterless fix the volunteers had suffered under but without the wealth of volunteer help. The odds worsened with the death of Fire Chief Sullivan during the first period of the disaster. Here, too, destroying the city with dynamite was the only way to stop the flames—with one interesting exception. Some of the men in Russian Hill, remembering, perhaps, that vinegar had once been used by the sparks in lieu of water, opened the wine cellars and poured their vintage red and even French champagnes onto the flames. But then fighting fire with booze was an established tradition and, as Lucius Beebe remarked about the feat, San Francisco was a city that, "in moments of trial, turned to champagne."

Now the booze, brawling and bugs have been taken out of fire fighting men and equipment, and we've found the answer to the query of an indignant Bostonian on the subject of restraining the volunteers—"Do you think, sir, that the citizens of Boston will ever submit to be prohibited from assisting a fellow-townsmen in distress? Such sort of laws may be obeyed in despotic countries or in cities where the inhabitants do not feel for one another; but this is not the case, nor ever will be, in Boston."



*"Remember when we had to chew our food?"*

# THE AUDIENCE IS DEAD

by William Redfield

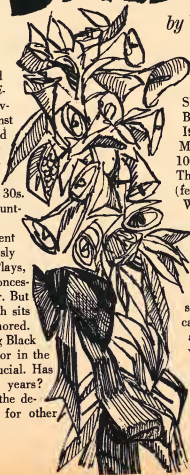
At the curtain of Clifford Odets' electrifying "Waiting For Lefty" the cast shouted "Strike! Strike! Strike!" and so did the audience. They were alive, then, those shouting savages. Half of them stood four-square against unions, but the evening's drama had grabbed them where the hairs are short and they responded. They had never heard of hip or the big beat. They were gullible, emotional, excitable, and faithful—the audiences of the 30s. Their counterparts of the 1960s, to put it bluntly, are over-sophisticated bores.

Nearly all the wits and critics who comment upon the Broadway scene have spoken tirelessly on What's Wrong With Today's Theatre. Plays, actors, box-office men, ushers, and even concessionaires have had a thorough working over. But the audience—the ticket-buying group which sits to watch the play—has been largely ignored. What Oscar Hammerstein II called "The Big Black Giant" is perhaps the least understood factor in the theatrical equation as well as the most crucial. Has audience response changed in the last 30 years? Yes. Has that change anything to do with the decline of Broadway? With all due regard for other

elements involved, the answer is Yes again.

In September of 1936 the brothers Shubert presented a farce-comedy at the Booth Theatre entitled "Swing Your Lady." It was about as distinguished as Ann-Margret's latest movie, yet it ran for over 100 performances to chuckling audiences. The plot concerned a professional wrestler (female) and her brood of hillbilly children. Would there be an audience for such a play today? The question is inwardly rhetorical and outwardly absurd.

In 1931, the Group Theatre produced a play called "1931"—which seems fair enough—but on Opening Night, one audience member stood up in the balcony to shout: "Hooray for the Soviet Union!" The cast was basking in curtain calls at the time and Mr. Franchot Tone, ignoring the left-wing implications of the play, stepped forward and shook an angry fist at the offensive balcony. "Hooray for the United States!" he shouted back. Politics aside, can you imagine such an exchange in a





*Is there a theatregoer in the house?*

Broadway playhouse circa 1965? You can? You must believe very theatrically in civil rights.

In 1928, Eugene O'Neill's "The Great God Brown" ran for eight months on Broadway despite luke-warm reviews. Even a bad rifleman could have dispatched elk in the orchestra at every performance, but the balcony seats went consistently clean. In other words, people of limited pocketbook were buying the play. Highbrows were low on it but middlebrows and lowbrows thought it pretty hot stuff. At one performance, Mr. Lawrence Langner overheard two young ladies discussing the play. "It's awfully dramatic, isn't it?" said one. "Yeah," said her friend, "but it's good."

Both girls spoke with Bronx-ish accents and both were dressed as cheaply and plainly as thirty-a-week shop-girls. Mr. Langner was deeply impressed and so am I. Where are such playgoers now? I wish I knew, as does every producer in New York, but I'm willing to bet that the same two lower-income ladies also saw "Swing Your Lady" in 1936 and even "1931" in 1931. Perhaps they didn't like them very much, but they saw them. Today they are doubtless stay-at-home grandmothers watching "Bewitched," "Bonanza," and "The Andy Williams Show." For a certainty, neither has seen a Broadway production since "The Hot Mikado." But worse than that, their grand-daughters haven't either.

Broadway's old-timers and middle-timers grumble a good deal about modern acting ("They scratch and they mumble"); modern plays ("Four letter words and fags"); and modern tickets ("Too expensive and too hard to get"). These are perfectly good grumbles but being a young old-timer (I'm 38), I would like to add a further grumble of my own: the modern audience. It too has changed and very much for the worse, nor am I entirely persuaded that the chicken came before the egg. Apropos of chickens as well as churns, today's Broadway audience is composed largely of butter-and-egg men who want the dancing girls brought on as soon as possible and who cannot understand why there are so many

dancing boys. These partially dead salesmen are enticed to the theatre by fearless flacks and PR men who have seen everything but monkeys making doughnuts and wouldn't pay cash money to see Mandy Rice-Davies in Richtofen's Flying Circus unless it meant a contract to promote World War III. The overwhelmingly tired businessman has been so heroically publicized lately, one wonders why he doesn't go back to his hotel and to bed. Tired or not, the businessman is also drunk. Both buyer and buyee have dined anywhere from Pavillon to "21" to Toffenetti's, depending on the size of their corporations. They have consumed from three to six cocktails, a bottle of wine, and enough well-seasoned food to put them into a state of near-catatonia. Ethel Merman and a brass band might succeed in keeping them awake but a serious playwright can hardly hold their attention for the better part of Act One.

Harsh of me? Yes—since "A Man For All Seasons"; "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf"; and the Gielgud-Burton "Hamlet" have all been put on successfully within the past four seasons. Add "Luther," if you wish. Very well. Four serious successes in four seasons. It begins to look as though Bored-way has room for one serious play per season—perhaps as a sop to culture. But up to the time of World War II—and even for a short time thereafter—was there not room on Broadway for not only serious theatre but for any sort of play which did not depend upon loud music and semi-clad showgirls? Yes, there was—because the audience still contained a goodly portion of shop-girls and shoe-clerks, to say nothing of head-waiters, 7th Avenue models, and sailors. The issues of cost and convenience have been much discussed and there can be no denying that many people cannot now afford either the price of an orchestra ticket or the inconvenience of purchasing a cheaper seat in the balcony, but a glib run-down of the change in prices will leave a number of sophisticated questions unanswered. For example, it was possible to put on a first-class Broadway production during the mid-thirties

for as little as \$15,000 when an orchestra seat was priced at \$3.30. The same production today would cost \$100,000 and up while the seat is priced at \$7.50. In other words, production costs have sextupled while the ticket price has little more than doubled. Producers will love me for pointing this out, but it will not help them to drag John and Jane Doe back to Broadway. For the real truth is that the carriage-trade audience (orchestra seats) has never been the heart of a healthy theatre. Up to 1941, it was possible to see any non-musical play—big hit or small, comedy or drama—for 55 cents. Moreover, such 2nd Balcony seats were available on short notice. First Balcony tickets cost \$1.10 and up, but not up very far. Recent attempts to woo the common audience back into Broadway playhouses by making balcony seats available at prices relative to motion picture prices have been admirable but only semi-successful. The hard truth is that Mr. and Mrs. Doe of New York City and Toledo are out of the theatre-going habit and it will take no less than a major sea-change to seduce them back.

During the lamentable meantime, Broadway audiences have become lazy, mindless, and bored. They simply do not supply the high-voltage response necessary to an incandescent performance. The performance of a play staffed with living actors changes from night to night, and these changes take place in direct relationship to the audience. No two performances are ever exactly the same, which is quite as it should be. Any theatre audience receives excitement and stimulation in direct ratio to its participation in the events on stage. Down through relentless time, actors have commented upon the dampening effect of a "dead" audience as well as the exhilaration provided by a quick group eager to share the dramatic experience. The connection between an audience and a cast of actors is so similar to the connection between a pair of lovers that a well-bred Protestant could practically blush. Many years ago, I attended the Broadway opening of a failure called "Brooklyn Biarritz" (Coney Island) which was no more tasteful or interesting than its title. The climax of the Second Act showed us a man killing another man beneath the boardwalk of Brighton Beach, the killer adding insult to injury by cursing his victim while strangling him. Somafabitch was shouted several times and there was much gurgling appropriate to crime at the Spa. One young lady who was seated next to me stood up and cheered as the curtain descended. Tears in her eyes, she then turned to her companion and said: "Oh, I think this is just terrific!"

Aesthetic considerations aside, I envied that young woman and I still do. Certainly I have never seen anyone, bright or stupid, drunk or sober, behave in such a way at the showing of a motion picture—not even a great one. But I behaved that way when I saw Marlon Brando in the stage version of "A Streetcar Named Desire" as I also did when I first saw Laurette Taylor. So does every theatre-goer sooner or later, because thrills and excitement belong to the living theatre and the finest movie ever made will never generate such an open-hearted response. A truly electric communication between the viewer and the event takes place only on a real stage with live actors.

But today's Broadway audiences do not lean forward in anticipation, hoping to be thrilled, uplifted, or enlightened. Instead, they lean back apathetically as if to say: "Show me." There are individual exceptions, but such individuals cannot keep even the average Broadway production running for more than a month. Not only do we lack a significant body of stage-struck ticket purchasers, a great majority of our population has never seen a play at all and couldn't care less. And I am speaking of the population of New York City, not Austin, Texas.

Today's theatrical audience has misplaced vulnerability, naivete, and—more importantly—the ability to listen, to participate, or to be moved. Some observers, Mr. Howard Taubman included, have said that really good plays will bring the serious audience back to our playhouses. I fear not. What little serious audience is left to us does not need bringing back. They stand at the box-offices like so many ravenous dogs, anytime they are given half the chance to be genuinely engaged. They loved "A Man For All Seasons," just as they loved "Virginia Woolf" and even "After The Fall," but they are a shrinking group. I do not believe that the widespread success of the first two plays indicates a resuscitation of widespread interest. I believe that it indicates critical acceptance followed by a mass of bored, but status-seeking snobs. The relative success of "The Deputy" strikes me as parochial and guilt-inspired rather than as a manifestation of serious theatrical interest. Finally, I am convinced that should there be more than one "Seasons" or "Woolf" or "Deputy" in a given season that Drama #2 would fall on its financial face, critics and public defenders notwithstanding. The expense-account audience is prepared to enjoy "Hello, Dolly!" and to put up with "A Man For All Seasons" only because it is necessary to tell the neighbors that they saw Paul Scofield act.





The terrible truth is that Broadway audiences are not an isolated phenomenon; they indelibly represent a national trend. That trend recklessly careens toward disinterest, lack of engagement, and an inability to be thrilled by anything less than Frank Sinatra singing at The Sands or a roller-coaster ride steep enough to frighten a test pilot. Neither experience is worth an aesthetic pin but both are flashy and "in", while anything less or even different is irrevocably "out". Should these same people literally see Loretta Taylor, they would begin to look with a jaundiced eye upon Sinatra, but if they don't see her, they will never know. Those who do see are so drunk or so tired that they can only be reached by fire-works and so the vicious circle completes itself, to the wasting of life.

Today, I can see the "big deal" in every human eye and I can see it wherever I look. Our society has managed to glorify cynicism, lack of participation, selfishness, and "I'm gonna get mine" to the exclusion of the perhaps puritanical virtues on which this nation was built. This is progress of a sort, for puritanism contained many repressions, but we have also paid a price and that price is reflected clearly in the modern Broadway audience. For every step of social progress, a price must be paid, and the New York theatre pays that price today. Not being a qualified social philosopher, I dare not carry the implications of this notion too far but theatre audiences indubitably reflect the trend at which I wag my finger. Modern Broadway audiences refuse to work.

They refuse to listen. They refuse to participate in the emotional event which takes place on stage. One can only conclude that unrelieved self-interest (and social laziness) leads eventually to a breaking down of the emotional and intellectual muscles six ways from the Jack, and that today's young people (and old people) want life and pleasure and entertainment brought to them, with the least amount of effort and sensory participation on their own part.

To watch a motion picture or a television show demands no effort whatever. It is no more comparable to watching a theatre performance than reading comic books is comparable to touring the Louvre. Even a serious film moves quickly, contains little verbiage, and causes its audience to think only indirectly. The modern art film, which supposedly substitutes for the sort of live theatre once attended by culture-buffs, rarely demands of its audience what was demanded by "Death Of A Salesman" or even "Our Town." Films are visual rather than verbal. They are dream-like rather than real. They are easy rather than hard. They are also entirely unaffected by the audience, be it good or bad, dead or alive. A motion picture is in the can: over and done with, unaffected, inaccessible. And like all things stuffed into cans, it is less alive than something fresh, even if it tastes good.

Our audience has become film-going rather than theatre-going because our audience is half-dead and mortally canned. What is worse, our audience remains dead even when they *do* go to the theatre. The only encouraging note is the wild peal of laughter heard now and then at plays directed by Mike Nichols and written by Neil Simon. Such laughter is a touching echo of what I heard thirty years ago from people closely resembling human beings. We have become, by and large, a nation of spectators rather than participants. But a really alive theatrical audience must be made up of individuals who want to participate and are capable of identifying with the pleasure and pain on stage. They are not drunken night-clubbers, capable only of identifying with a rock-and-roller's latest vocal innovation or lyric distortion; they are humans wishing to identify with a human experience which surpasses the gimmicks of modern success. In other words, they wish to respond to the works of an artist, rather than be titillated by the tricks of a fake.

A bored gentleman twisting the dial of his television set, trying to weigh the relative merits of "Bonanza" and the "Million Dollar Movie" alters the shape of neither. Whatever his choice, both products will remain the

same. Why? Because they are products, rather than works. But let a theatre actor catch sight of a seat-holder trudging up the aisle toward a door marked EXIT and his next few lines will show at least a tiny bit of strain, I assure you. The theatre actor is affected by his audience, individually and collectively. Audience and play are inevitably one. When they are not, the evening will be—to one degree or another—a failure.

I recall a New York performance of "A Man For All Seasons" during which a ticket-holder in the first row began groaning and mumbling with displeasure before the play was five minutes old. His behavior was noisy, distracting, and upsetting to both cast and audience. Was he drunk? Was he crazy? Was he a hatchet man for David Merrick? Was he—in fact—David Merrick?\* I discussed the matter with George Rose who, as the Common Man, addressed the audience directly through much of the play and could therefore be most understandably annoyed by any unruly behavior. Mr. Rose merely shrugged when I declared that the fellow was driving me batty. "He's just bored," he said. Such an attitude is both professional and sophisticated, but rest assured that the evening's performance was far from being one of the best our company delivered. In choosing so depressing and negative an anecdote, I hope to apostrophize my conviction precisely: the very relationship which makes it possible for a single member of the audience to disrupt a theatrical evening is the self-same relationship which should be cherished and protected by anyone who loves entertainment in any form whatever.

Years ago, Broadway actors dreaded matinee performances because they were usually half-filled and often with children and their governesses. Today, the afternoon performances are among the best given in New York. Why? Because the audience is more attentive. The housewives, stage-struck little old ladies, teenagers, drama students, and would-be actors who attend the daytime shows are in their seats neither reluctantly nor as status-seeking snobs. Instead, they are in love with the theatre and cannot find comparable excitement elsewhere. They are, in fact, the final, decimated residue of the shop-girl, shoe-clerk audience for which I so achingly yearn. In other words, they are human beings. They are neither drunk nor tired; they think Frank Sinatra is a clown; and they need neither Olsen and Johnson nor semi-nude girls to keep them awake. All they *do* need is a good play, properly put on. In fact, the play need not be a masterpiece to please them. It need merely be a live theatrical experience which surpasses

\*The play was presented by a rival producer named Robert Whitehead.



the pre-digested, bloodless pap which appears on our ubiquitous silver screens.

Can something be done about all this? I doubt it, but it is surely worth noting that such social phenomena as bored and indifferent audiences are symptomatic of a larger illness. A theatre audience, though it is composed of individuals, is not an isolated group breathing rarified air. It is a cross-section of human types which reflects the immediate pre-occupations of a particular society at a particular time. It is entirely possible that audiences, as well as people in general, have lost a certain squareness. The salt, in fact, seems to have been sifted from the earth and "square" is now a dirty word. When an entire society becomes hip and cynical, it also becomes harder to reach and engage. A motion picture such as "What's New, Pussycat?" intrigues its audience precisely because it takes hipness and cynicism a few steps further than even the audience dared hope.

The audience I cry for so plangently is not necessarily a hip group or even an intelligent one. In fact, they are sometimes less than discriminating, which is perfectly all right with me, since I have found that discriminating audiences tend to be wrong as often as they are right. They will reject "The Great God Brown" because it's a bore, darling, and accept "Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte" because it's camp. But the indiscriminating, unhip, and possibly unintelligent group has a healthy distaste for camp, whether High, Middle, or Low. It is more accessible than it is snobbish; more emotional than it is intellectual; and quite a bit more ready to shout its approval

than to nod its acceptance. What I prize in an audience, regardless of intelligence or sophistication, is an appetite for participation and a capacity for emotional response. Mr. George Bernard Shaw was surely an intelligent and sophisticated man, but Hilaire Belloc said of him: "Mr. Shaw is so determined not to be taken in that he remains forever out."

So does our current audience. It is hip, you bet, but I wonder if the hip are happy? Sometimes I even wonder if they are in. For this very reason, I have blithely ignored the off-Broadway movement, which has practically dropped dead from in-ness. Despite some noteworthy achievements, such as "The Connection," "The Fantasticks," and "The Threepenny Opera," off-Broadway has suffered from a lack of "square" audiences. Now that the ticket prices are almost as high as they are uptown and the seats almost as comfortable, off-Broadway has developed all the symptoms of creative asthma. It is breathing hard and heavy and can barely be distinguished from its moribund brother uptown.

Senator Margaret Chase Smith recently unburdened herself of a fascinating battle-cry. "What this country needs," said the lady, "is more squares." She added that there had been too much glorification of the confidence-man, the corner-cutter, and the goof-off. Perhaps there has also been too much ironic laughter, too much easy tolerance, too much black humor, as well as too little

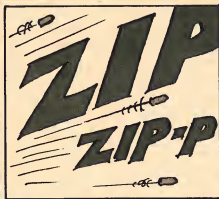
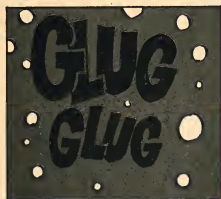
earnest participation in the issues of living. Hardly a more tiresome adjective than "earnest" exists in the English language, and the fellow for whom "life is real, life is earnest" has long been a figure of fun, but when I was a small boy—and I really was at one time—I saw cheaply dressed young ladies and gentlemen arriving at the Belasco Theatre for performances of "Dead End" and, later, "Golden Boy" whose eyes were lit up with earnest anticipation and eagerness. Maybe they were a bit *too* earnest but they also managed to be a long way from complacent. They were surely not drunk; they had surely not eaten at Pavillon or even Toffenetti's. Most likely their pre-theater supper was ingested at Nedick's and consisted of one hot dog and one orange drink. No doubt they saved fifty cents that way, which was close to the price of the ticket. "Dead End" and "Golden Boy" were good plays, as were "Three Men On A Horse" and "Born Yesterday." But they also played to good audiences. What the old professionals call "live ones."

Oh, you beautiful shop-girls and shoe-clerks and low-brows and middle-brows, fling away your pop-corn and your boredom and come back to the living theatre where you belong! Yesterday might turn out to be tomorrow. If you can pay \$2.50 to stand on line for "What's New, Pussycat?," why not pay the same for a balcony seat to "The Odd Couple"? Believe me, it's a funny play. And, just like you, it is alive.



Graham Wilson

*"How did you come by this strange power to cloud men's minds, Cranston?"*



The guys in the  
**TRICK SUITS**



*Which way to the phone booth?*

*by William F. Nolan*

KIDS in knickers. Kids with scabbed knees. Aged ten, eleven, twelve . . . Kids exchanging shouted opinions on a Kansas City streetcorner on a warm summer's afternoon in the early forties. Yelling, waving their arms, ignoring the harassed-looking adult pedestrians who pass them.

"The Flash is the fastest thing on earth!"

"Yer nuts! Superman can outrun him *any* old day."

"Captain Marvel could whip Superman if he tried."

"Could not."

"Could so."

"Sub-Mariner can outswim all of 'em! He's half-fish and he can—"

"Yer crazy! The Human Torch can knock him silly."

"What about the Sandman—he's best!"

"Batman and Robin are best of all!"

"Are not!"

"Are too!"

"Are not!"

Kids. Vigorously defending their paper idols, wildly extolling the particular virtues of Plastic Man, the Spectre, the Shield, Doll Man, the Blue Beetle, Bulletman and dozens of others: caped and hooded heroes endowed with incredible strength; super beings from the super world of the comic books, dedicated to the eternal battle against injustice and evil. Crimefighters. Mystery men. Masked marvels. The stuff of dreams in raw color. With thugs named Rocky and Spike and Bruno in pin-striped suits, who always say "de car" instead of "the car." With wily, not-to-be-trusted orientals and mad-eyed scientists and savage, shelf-browed European anti-American scum. With special sound effects: WHAM! ZAP! WHONK! AWK! EEEK! BLAM! POW! OOF! With bumbling cops who needed all the help they always got. With helpless, dim-witted girls who constantly needed to be rescued. With basic dialogue every kid could understand: "Now, Mr. Batman, you are powerless against this deadly heat ray which will burn you and your meddlesome little friend, Robin the Boy Wonder, to a crisp!" With giant machine-brains, undersea kingdoms, wonder serums and test-tube miracles. With leaping, smashing action . . . action . . . action . . .

I was one of the knee-scabbed kids on that Missouri street corner. I owned 400 comic books—and I knew Batman, as well as I knew my father. (In some ways, maybe better.) I knew that Captain America was Steve

Rogers, Hawkman was Carter Hall, the Green Lantern was Alan Scott and the Flash was Jay Garrick. Until they encountered Evil and stripped off their "outer garments" and—BLAM! POW! OOF!

The clan from Hollywood saw money in the comics. They saw box-office gold in Superman, Batman and Captain Marvel. And they made a terrible mistake: they put our heroes on film. They made Saturday afternoon serials out of them. I recall the crushing disappointment I experienced at the first chapter of Superman. Here was no rock-chested, stern-eyed man of steel in a skintight fighting costume; here was a sad, flat-footed guy in a saggy union suit, flying stiffly over a cardboard skyline. Boy, we *hated* him! And when Batman and Captain Marvel made their cinema debuts we hated them too. Imposters! Fakes! *Actors!* Comic heroes belonged in the comics.

Actually, our heroes were direct descendants of pulp-fiction and radio: Doc Savage, the Green Hornet, the Lone Ranger, the Shadow . . . and at least we could accept them in this form. As radio voices or as characters on a page of pulp paper they were okay. But on the screen, no thanks. (The film folk got wise to this, and changed Superman into a cartoon format, which was much more acceptable to us.)

Teachers and psychiatrists and parents and Responsible Citizens called our world "trash." Comic books warped us, they claimed. Filled our questing young minds with dark violence and thoughts of murder. Nerts, we said. And kept reading *Action Comics*, *Whiz Comics*, *All-Star Comics*, *Detective Comics*, *Adventure Comics*, *Nickel Comics* (the rest all cost a dime) and many, many more. (Fifteen million of them were sold each month in the early forties, and the figure climbed sharply from there.)

The *Chicago Daily News* (May 8, 1940) dubbed them: "lurid, with unreal super-heroics . . . depending for their appeal upon mayhem, murder, torture, blazing machine guns, hooded justice and voluptuous females in scanty attire." Bad. Shocking.

Yeah, they were bad all right. They taught us terrible things: that criminals always lose, that justice triumphs, that virtue pays, that strength defeats evil, that freedom was worth fighting for and that America was a great nation. I seriously doubt that any of those crusading parents or teachers bothered to really *read* what they attacked so zealously. I speak for the comics up to 1944. I don't know what they were like ten years later, when Frederic Wer-



tham published his heatedly evangelistic book, *Seduction of the Innocent*, and the comic industry imposed a censorship code. Maybe they *were* shocking, by then. H-Holy M-Moley! (as Billy Batson was wont to exclaim) It's lucky I survived them! No less a critic than Wolcott Gibbs defended our four-color friends in *The New Yorker*. Reviewing Wertham, he wrote: "In many ways, it is an absurd and alarming book, full of examples of the psychiatrist's peculiar gift for referring all abnormal behavior to one special stimulus . . . I like to think that Superman and his pals are up against the battle of their perverse, fantastic lives."

Today the vintage comic books of the thirties and forties are greatly prized and hard to come by. The Academy of Comic Book Fans and Collectors boasts a membership of 2,000, and from it have come several amateur magazines dealing with the glorious old crime-fighters. Author-cartoonist Jules Feiffer has produced *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, a splendid book devoted, with wit and love, to the likes of Batman and Captain America. And so the wheel has turned, and the masked men have outlived the Moms and the Pops and the Werthams.

What were they?  
Who were they?  
How were they born?



Superman was the creation of writer Jerome Siegel and artist Joe Shuster. He made his sensational debut in the June, 1938 issue of *Action Comics*. (I was ten at the time, and bought an off-the-press copy for a dime. Today that issue is worth \$100.) Superman was the first of the fabled crime busters and, in the opinion of many historians, owes his existence to novelist Philip Wylie, whose book, *Gladiator*, was published eight years earlier. Siegel's Clark Kent has much in common with Wylie's Hugo Danner. The comparison is worth citing.

In the novel, as he grew up, Wylie's young hero "learned that he was superhuman . . . careless of obstacles that would have stopped an ordinary mortal." Wylie has him tell his father that "I'm . . . the strongest man in the world . . . I can jump higher'n a house. I can run faster'n a train. I can pull up big trees an' push 'em over. . . I'm like a man made out of iron."

Contrast this to Superman's first adventure wherein Siegel related: "As the lad grew older he learned . . . that he could hurdle skyscrapers . . . raise tremendous weights . . . run faster than a streamline train . . . and nothing less than a bursting shell could penetrate his skin." (Wylie has Hugo defy a machine gun. "The bullets had not penetrated him . . . He was invulnerable.")

Hugo's parents counsel him. "Someday you'll find a use for . . . all that strength . . . a big, noble use . . . Until that day, you have to be humble, like all the rest of us. You mustn't show off or do cheap tricks . . . Wait your time, son . . ."

Clark Kent's parents (who adopt him) give almost identical advice. "This great strength of yours—you've got to hide it from people . . . But when the proper time comes you must use it to assist humanity."

Thus, it would seem, Wylie's "man of iron" became Siegel's "man of steel." The parallels cannot be ignored.

Of course, there were differences. Hugo's father injected his pregnant wife with a "special medicine" which produced the superbaby. And, as every comic buff knows, Superman was not earth-born. He came from the planet Krypton, was raised by the Kents and given their name.

Superman never quite pleased us. We were annoyed with his role as the bespectacled reporter given to mooning after Lois Lane. The kids in our block considered Miss Lane the world's dumbest broad, since she could never recognize Kent, as Superman, without his glasses. There was never any suspense for us in the stories in which Lois almost recognized Kent; we knew damned well she never *really* would. Which was very annoying.

Superman was not only the first but was the most universally popular and successful of the great inkpot heroes. "The guy in the trick suit" (as one comic thug called him) earned his two creators \$100,000 a year and is, today, read in 36 countries in nine languages. Siegel

and Shuster contested their ownership claim in 1948, with a bitter court action wherein they sued National Publications for five million—and lost. National retained all rights to Superman. S and S announced they would surpass him with Funnyman (who wore a clown costume, sported a retractable steel fist and fought with streams of water and trick smoke clouds). But the new character simply became part of the routine Siegel/Shuster stable, which included Federal Man, Spy and (as early as '37) Slam Bradley. Their star-making days were over.

That amiable pop-up hero, Captain Marvel, was Superman's chief rival in the brute-strength department—and whenever the mousey, stuttering newsboy, Billy Batson, needed help the good Captain would appear in a BLAM! of jagged lightning. All Billy had to do was shout "Shazam!"

A tottery old white-bearded wizard with that word for a name taught Billy the magic trick when the button-eyed lad encountered him in an abandoned subway. The wizard was understandably pooped from a 5,000-year struggle against injustice, and wanted a successor. The beefy Captain Marvel, with Nixon jowls and fancy gold piping on his fighting cape, took over to combat a string of unlikely menaces, including the World's Wickedest Scientist, the World's Wickedest Girl, the World's Wickedest Criminal and the World's Wickedest Worm. (The latter title was not worth much, since there were very few genuinely wicked worms around to compete for it.)

In the early fifties a court action eliminated the World's Mightiest Mortal. Paper work killed the paper hero. But he was very much alive when I was a kid. In our neighborhood we were especially fond of young Batson and his orange-gold alter-ego. It was a strength and a comfort to know that at least *one* kid could strike back at the unyielding adult world by shouting a single word. Nobody ordered Captain Marvel to do his arithmetic or to be home before dark or get a haircut or come in to supper or rake the yard. We all secretly hoped that we might, someday, meet a tired old wizard who could grant us a similar power. But, unfortunately, there were no abandoned subways in Kansas City. So we did our arithmetic and got home before dark and got our hair cut and came in for supper and raked the yard.

A square-jawed, dark-suited figure burst forth from the May, 1939 issue of *Detective Comics*. The Batman! A gray night-avenger in a great ribbed cape, his belt filled with gas pellets and high explosives, his eyes white slits in a bat-eared hood. And with him: Robin, the Boy Wonder ("that laughing young daredevil"), first of the boy crime partners.

Batman was vulnerable. He couldn't fly; a blow to the head could knock him out; a bullet could make him bleed; he could make mistakes; he could lose a fight if



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the odds were stacked against him. All of which made him a prime favorite with the kids on our block. We always resented Superman's steel facade, and followed his all-conquering exploits with a certain degree of disdain. Batman we accepted without reservation.

In those early adventures he moved against a blazing cartwheel moon through night-shadowed alleys, between looming char-black buildings. Bob Kane, his creator, was a consummate mood-master who used the darkness as a stage on which to play out Batman's wild battles with the Scarecrow, the fiendish, red-lipped Joker, the wily Penguin and glass-jawed thugs named (of course) Rocky and Spike and Bruno.

Batman's origin, like Superman's, is well known: as a boy, Bruce Wayne watched a trigger-happy thief kill both his parents. The youth swore to avenge them by fighting crime in every form—and began training mind and body toward this goal. His father's estate provided all the money he needed—and he eventually became, in Kane's words, "a master scientist" as well as a great athlete. A bat flew in through the window of his mansion one evening, giving him the idea for his costume. (Which seemed normal enough. In the comics, bats and big mansions belonged together.)

"Criminals are a . . . cowardly lot," mused Wayne. "My disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts." It did just that. Actually, each of the masked heroes had the same basic idea. All criminals had potentially terror-stricken hearts in Comieland. It's a wonder they were able to get any banks robbed or armored cars looted when one considers the locust horde of masked men over-populating the comic skies.

Thugs had it rough with "ordinary" heroes dropping



out of the blue, but dealing with the Human Torch was something else again: a man-shaped ball of fire, trailed by a smaller ball of fire (Toro, the Flaming Kid). These two would give any local fire department nervous fits with their indiscriminate tossing about of fireballs, blazing hoops, ropes, spears and arrows of flame. Yet they never seemed to burn down any cities. With his fire out, the Torch was just a big hulk in red underwear, a product of another comic book lab experiment in which a synthetic man was designed to function as "a human torch." Confusing? Not to us kids. Not, certainly, in comparison to the Sub-Mariner . . .

Spawned by a sexually-liberated sailor and a non-human fishmother from Atlantis, he was called Prince Namor, had pointy ears, a V-shaped chin, long oriental eyebrows—and was as mean as hell. He hated the U.S. ("I'll conquer this nation and enslave all of its people. I'll be emperor of America!") Something of a pest from the outset, he broke up the Empire State Building, knocked down elevated trains and tossed luckless sightseers out of the Statue of Liberty. Even the Human Torch couldn't subdue him, though they waged many fine water vs. fire battles.

Later, when the Second World War turned Namor into a hero (with Jap subs as his targets), his ears got less pointy. Kids were supposed to start cheering him, but the guys in our block kept on hissing; he never fooled us, not for a minute.

We reserved our patriotic cheers for Captain America: a flag with muscles. No doubt about his being a superhero. In fact, next to Batman, he was right up there at the top of our lists. A product of the remarkably talented team of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby (Sandman, the Vision, Manhunter, the Blue Bolt, etc.), he was presented in a style both vital and exciting, full of wild angles and explosive action. Villains were roundly clobbered; chairs and tables splintered under powerhouse blows. No team could match Simon/Kirby for sheer slam-crack effects on a comic page. When Captain America piled, shield first, into a gang of nogoodniks the walls quaked! And who but Simon/Kirby could draw such wonderfully-twisted creatures of menace: freaks, mad dwarfs, evil lizard-men, crazed Arabs, leering Nazis? They all erupted from those masterfully-inked S/K panels.

Captain America began his adult life as a 98-pound weakling. He was Steve Rogers, an Army reject, chosen for a lab experiment by a dedicated professor, who had invented a wonder growth serum. Steve was injected with the stuff and WHAP! Success. A mass of muscles. After the scientist was gunned and his serum destroyed Steve took on the role of Captain America and galloped off to fight subversive agents. His nosey boy companion, Bucky, just happened to see Steve skinning into his fancy

costume, so—to keep his young trap shut—he was allowed to fight by Cap's side from that moment on.

We didn't much dig the Spectre around our neighborhood—mainly because he was a ghost who got his tips from the spirit world and used any info a fellow-spook provided him with to fight human criminals. When detective Jim Corrigan was murdered, the hooded Spectre was released. Which was just a bit *much*. We gave him the go-by.

Plastic Man fared better with us. Drawn by Jack Cole (who worked on many a masked marvel and later gained national fame with *Playboy* magazine) PM began his rubbery career as an ordinary non-stretchable crook named Eel O'Brian. He got some acid spilled on him during a safe-cracking job, and the acid fed into his blood stream. When he recovered he found he could bend and shape himself into any form, that he was literally a man of plastic. He decided to fink on his former pals and enter the crook-hunting game. ("Here's my chance to atone for all the evil I've done!") Thus we were treated to a series of elastic adventures wherein Plastic Man snaked out his arms to catch a fleeing thug halfway down the street, or turned into a bouncing ball, a rubber fireplug or a rug—as the situation demanded. All very entertaining.

The girls on our block read Wonder Woman, but no guy among us would have been caught dead with a WW comic (though we occasionally sneak-read an episode just to see what she was up to). She came to America from Paradise Island, an Amazon kingdom (or queendom) somewhere "on the vast sea." As with the Torch, she was a synthetic creature in the beginning, a clay statue fashioned by a gal named Hippolyte and given life by the Goddess Athena. The child grows up and enters an Amazon contest, beating out all the other rugged females and earning the right to become Wonder Woman. ("As winner, you will receive the unique costume and magic lasso, prepared under Aphrodite's personal direction, to wear in America!")

Statside she was oppressively smug, self-assured ("Pooh! That's nothing! I can do that with one hand!") and not very attractive in her star-spangled bloomers. Her muscles were in all the wrong places, and those little cupid's-bow lips were downright silly. She had no damn business mixing in a mystery man's world—and we relegated her to the hall closet with *Classic Comics* and *True Comics*.

The Flash was always welcome on our block. He didn't have Superman's strength, just his speed. The Flash loved to catch bullets on the fly and casually sprint past speeding autos.

Here was yet another test-tube hero. As a college student, Jay Garrick was working alone in the lab when he

# The FLASH



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clumsily knocked over some beakers—and was rendered unconscious by hard-water gas fumes. He awoke as “the fastest thing on earth.” His costume carried out the theme of “winged Mercury”—and he wore a big tin hat with wings on it. (And just how do you hide a big tin hat with wings on it under your outer garments?) Jay’s girlfriend knew he was the Flash, but had enough moxie to keep his secret.

Hawkmán’s wings were much larger. He’d strap on the huge, feathery set and go flapping off over the cities. A bit awkward, but at least he was spared the tedious routine of having to acquire the magic power of flight. Hawkman was a bit of a priss, though, and inclined to stuffiness. We liked the Green Lantern more.

Alan Scott was the Lantern—and he latched onto its powers as the sole survivor of a train wreck. Alan had been holding a green engineer’s lantern at the time of the wreck, and right away the darn thing started talking to him. “I am the green flame of life,” it told Scott, and chattered away for several pages, ending with the remark, “dark evil cannot stand light.” All of which seemed to make perfect sense to Alan. So long as he wore a ring made from the lantern (which was originally a whumping big comet from god-knows-where in space) he was able to penetrate walls, deflect bullets, soar through the blue and give all evildoers a helluva rough time. The decision to wear tights was inevitable. (“I must have a costume that is so bizarre that once I am seen I will never be forgotten!”)

The whole idea of elaborate caped, cloaked, gloved or hooded crimefighting costumes was one of never-ending

fascination for us kids. These mystery men were always stepping quickly into alleys or phone booths to discard their outer garments. The city must have been full of abandoned suits, shoes, ties, shirts, socks . . . (And where did they keep their wallets?) The cost of replacing all these discarded outer garments must have been staggering. The mind boggles in trying to estimate just how many extra pairs of glasses Clark Kent had to have on hand at his pad.

None of the mystery men seemed to earn much money (discounting the few rich idlers such as Bruce Wayne) and their crook-bashing sure didn’t pay any bills. A mystery man wasn’t covered by social security, old-age benefits or pension plans. And his extraordinary medical expenses (after a hard night of getting shot and stabbed and clubbed) must have put him well out-of-pocket. Accident coverage was certainly not available. Any guy whose hobby constantly requires him to jump from buildings, dive over cliffs, leap on and off trains and speeding cars, face grenades, machine guns, tank guns and buzzsaws is simply *not* considered a sensible risk.

My first professional writing was for the comic books,\* but *not* in the super-hero line. In 1954 I worked for the Walt Disney magazines, doing plots, layout and dialogue for *Picardy Mouse Comics*. (This was a full decade after I’d parted with my super-hero collection; nearly 450 vintage issues which today would fetch \$2,000 on the market. I was happy to get five bucks for the lot back in ‘44).

I’d written and illustrated an award-winning comic strip in high school and, prior to this, when the hero fever was raging in me, I had created and drawn original costumes for 42 separate mystery men—none of which were professionally submitted anywhere. I began with my greatest character, the Flaming Schrab (which was how I spelled Scarab at the age of eleven)—then quickly added the Bomb and the Serpent to my stable. The Serpent was, in his natural form, an ordinary non-violent garden snake—but when a crime called for his services he became an eight-foot masked man sporting twin knives and a floppy hat. The Bomb lived “out in the weird moors” and fought a villain with two tongues and a lot of hair which I called the Bronze Killer. (He was some kind of mutated

\*It is worth noting that several well known crime writers and science fictioners did work for the “hero” comics, under their own names and numerous pseudonyms. The most widely publicized is Mickey Spillane, who went on from the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner to Mike Hammer. The Binder brothers worked together on the old heroes, and Otto did Captain Marvel and Bulletman. (In all, he estimates he’s done over *three thousand* stories for the comics!) Henry Kuttner was also quite prolific in this field. Ken Crossen did the Green Lama; Manly Wade Wellman did Blackhawk; Gardner Fox did the Flash; H. L. Gold did Lt. Hercules and Alfred Bester worked on Batman.



super ape.) I recall having a very difficult time deciding whether or not to leave the Bomb's ears outside his hood.

I coolly outranked Captain America with Major England—and replaced Hawkman with the Lynx. (He didn't fly, but he growled plenty.) And since colors were very popular in those days I made ample use of them with the Blue Sparrow, the Golden Star, the Gray Warrior, the Green Sapphire, the Red Cape (non-commie), Black Dynamite, the Silver Bullet and the Purple Dynamo. I made crude stand-up paper cutouts of these splendid fellows—and filled notebook pages with their poorly-spelled adventures. I had the Bomb 'steliathly investigateing" a haunted castle. One of my victims "schreeched" in pain—and thugs were constantly identifying the Scarab with a startled "*Schrab!*"

The years in which I read and revered the super-heroes

(1939 through 1943) formed the Golden Age of comics, and the issues that we kids pored over, spilled cookie crumbs on, shot marbles for, jammed beneath our pillows at night and hid under our shirts at school are now prized by pop-art painters (of the Lichtenstein/Ramos school), avid collectors and cartoonists, and students of nostalgia.

But the kids on our block—wherever they may be today—don't need to seek out and re-purchase those wondrous old blood n' thunder issues. We own them. Every one. They are in our minds and our imaginations. They helped us grow up. They were not, for the most part, well drawn or well written or well plotted, but they made our young hearts soar, and we loved them.

Crimefighters. Mystery men. Masked marvels.

The stuff of dreams in raw color.





*"But... we're practically brothers!"*



Bulldog Drummond Magnifying Glass

Genuine Purple Gene Autry Scarf

Melvin Purvis Sacred Scarab Good Luck Ring

Captain Midnight Photomatic Code-O-Graph Badge

Orphan Annie Three Power Telescope

Red Ryder Lariat

Sergeant Preston of the Yukon Totem Pole

Tom Mix Spurs that Glow in the Dark

Simulated Sky King Self-Propelling Plane

Jack Armstrong Magic Magnesium Parachute Ball



# TEAR OFF A BOX TOP

by Ron Goulart

*Were you the first in your neighborhood to own a  
Simulated Gold Tom Mix Bar Brand Straight Shooter  
Badge, just like Tom's and guaranteed to prove  
you're a special pal of his?*

If you were a kid in the 30s and early 40s, one of your biggest problems was how to eat up all that breakfast food you'd talked your parents into buying. You needed the breakfast food so you could tear off the box tops. You wanted the box tops so you could send away for all the incredible premiums the cereal companies were offering on the radio and in the Sunday funnies. Desirable stuff like a Tom Mix Whistling Ring, a Little Orphan Annie Shakeup Mug, Captain Midnight's Photomatic Code-o-graph Badge the same type as those used in big Airplane Factories and Government Buildings, and a Junior G-Man badge sent to you by the FBI man who had really been on the spot when they shot down Dillinger in front of the Biograph in Chicago. In a period when your father was earning \$30 a week it was great to have such things available absolutely free or for only ten cents in coin and one box top or a reasonable facsimile.

And it wasn't just box tops that could be converted into premiums. The piece of wax paper at the end of a loaf of bread could bring you a Victory Patrol Badge guaranteed to glow in the dark, a bottle cap was good for a genuine man-eating tiger shark's tooth, and with Popsicle bags you could get long range field glasses, a fielder's glove, a bouncing beach ball and a full size Indian blanket.

The greatest advertising line ever written was born in a kid premium ad. "Be the first in your neighborhood to own one!" That phrase did to kids what the ocean does to lemmings. You couldn't resist it. Your anxiety to possess the premium lasted from the time you sent in the box top until the day the mail man brought it. That meant being anxious for from four to six weeks while

the premium made its way, third class, to you. Anxiety then gave way to disappointment, usually. The original hypnosis of the radio show had worn off and besides that the object didn't work the way you'd hoped, if it worked at all. The built-in obsolescence of the average premium was so effective that the thing wore out for you about the moment you shook it out of its mailing carton. Still there was excitement and adventure in being a premium buff, even the address Battle Creek sounded exciting, and sometimes the premium really lived up to expectations. Like a gambler, you knew you couldn't always win.

The best, the most exciting and mysterious premiums, the premiums with almost talismanic powers, were those tied in with clubs. Something about being a pre-adolescent boy fills you with an overwhelming impulse to form secret societies and join things. Dr. Spock says this is the beginning of the instinct for organizing community life and is what makes civilization work. The people in the kid business, particularly in the 1930s, knew all about the club obsession and they set about recruiting everywhere. On the radio, in the Sunday papers, in comic books. The breakfast food executives were able to sense that the Cub Scouts and the club that met in the garage would never completely satisfy the joining desire. They provided the Junior G-Men and the Secret Squadron and the Ralston Straight Shooters.

One of the earliest mysterious groups was called Skippy's Secret Society and was invented by Robert Hardy Andrews, a radio writer who also thought up *Ma Perkins* and *Just Plain Bill*. The Society was promoted on *Skippy*, a radio serial based on the Percy Crosby

comic strip. To join you had to send in a Wheaties box top and also promise to eat two heaping bowls of Wheaties every day. Andrews gave the Secret Society a Secret Handshake and a Secret Code. "I lifted the code," he says, "from the *Gold Bug* cryptogram." Skippy was the show that introduced the song that starts, "Have you tried Wheaties, the best breakfast food in the land?" and the slogan "The breakfast of champions." Andrews made all this up, too.

Crime was all over the headlines in the 30s and was a major preoccupation of every boy. While no cereal manufacturer offered to make you a member of a mob, a good many of them gave you the chance to get in on the war on crime. The most popular, and most publicized, law and order group of the 1930s was the FBI, better known then as the G-Men. With wonderful inspiration, Post Toasties hired the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Chicago office and had him front a box top organization called the Junior G-Men.

The ace G-Man who lent himself to this promotion was Melvin Purvis. Purvis, a former South Carolina lawyer, had supervised the captures of John Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd and Baby Face Nelson. The publicity attached to these captures, even the botched ones, made Purvis "the most famous operative of the most famous law enforcement agency in the United States." Purvis decided to cash in on it. He quit the FBI in 1935 and wrote a best-seller about his G-Man days, *American Agent*. Then he went to work for General Foods and Post Toasties.

A series of ad strips featuring fictionalized Purvis adventures began running in the Sunday comic sections. By sending in Post Toasties box tops you could get a Melvin Purvis Fingerprint Set, a 24-carat gold finish Junior G-Man ring, a Junior G-Man Badge, which was also available in girls' style, a G-Man Squad Gun ("Absolutely harmless!") and an Autographed Photo of Melvin Purvis.

When asked why he'd associated himself with a breakfast food promotion, Purvis said it was because "the training of our youth has been sadly neglected." J. Edgar Hoover was usually pleased to see the FBI mentioned in print, even in pulp magazines and comic books, but he is said to have felt Purvis went too far with Post Toasties. This may be the reason that in 1937 the Junior G-Men changed their name to the Law-And-Order Patrol.

A great quantity of athletic equipment was given away during the Depression, usually with a baseball player as front man for the premiums. In the early 30s Quaker Puffed Wheat and Puffed Rice offered you the Babe Ruth Baseball Club in Sunday comics ads with headlines like, "Free every week—900 Balls!" By writing to Babe at Box 1083, Chicago, and sending the right number of Quaker box tops, you would receive a gold-plated baseball ring (2 box tops), Babe Ruth's Big Book of Baseball (2 box tops) and an Umpire's Watch Fob Score Indicator (three box tops). There was also a Baseball Charm Bracelet for girls.

The only thing that changed in the sports clubs was the ball player. Grapenuts promoted a group known as the Dizzy Dean Winners and Huskies invited you to join the Huskies Club, whose president was Lou Gehrig. The Huskies Club Pin was a "beautiful bronze design with richly etched insignia." The figure etched in the insignia was not Lou Gehrig but the Discobolus.

An essential preoccupation, after crime and baseball, was aviation. Your capacity for airplanes could never be filled, even with all the flying stuff you got in the 30s and 40s. From real life, by way of the newspapers, came Amelia Earhart and Wiley Post and, later, The Flying Tigers. In the funnies and comic books you found Smilin' Jack, Tailspin Tommy, Scorchy Smith, Flyin' Jenny and The Masked Pilot. Radio was the best airplane medium of all, because of the sound effects. No real plane sounded as awe-inspiring as the one flying around behind your radio's cloth speaker. Out of the radio flew Jimmy Allen, Hop Harrigan, the Sky Blazers, Sky King and Captain Midnight.

A pioneer in flying premiums was Col. Roscoe Turner, a daredevil pilot with a waxed moustache and a pet lion. Roscoe Turner was a real flyer in the 30s, but he participated in so many shows and premium promotions you thought of him as slightly better than real life. The colonel's earliest club was the Flying Corps, backed by Heinz Rice Flakes. The premiums here were free with one number "57" from a box. Roscoe Turner offered you a Roscoe Turner Pilot's License, a certificate of membership signed by Roscoe Turner, the Famous Secret Instructions and "How To Be A Captain, Then A Major!" The best premiums were the Flying Corps wings, bronze, silver plated, gold plated. A fine line of copy appeared with them. "Wear these swanky wings!"

Colonel Turner had flying adventures in a Sunday comic strip, where he managed to bring off an early form of cross plugging. His lion was named Gilmore and whenever the colonel mentioned him, he was getting in a free plug for Gilmore Gas, another company he worked for. The Flying Corps faded out with Rice Flakes but Roscoe Turner came back in the late 30s with a new group, the Sky Blazers. This outfit was featured on a Phillips H. Lord radio show of that name and sponsored by Wonder Bread. The people behind Sky Blazers weren't as subtle as the Heinz folks, and they only bothered to make up one Official Sky Blazers Rule. "Eat two slices of Slo-Baked Wonder Bread at every meal!"

The longest lasting of the flying clubs was Captain Midnight's Secret Squadron, a group that flourished in the 1940s. Basically the Secret Squadron was just like all the other clubs but it seemed to have an extra dimension to it. The name Secret Squadron had just the right mysterious sound, and the captain himself was equally mysterious. Nobody knew his real name and you had the feeling he never took off his airplane helmet. I was eight when I first enlisted in the Squadron, and no group since has produced quite that thrill in me. The only unsettling



thing about the organization was Ovaltine.

I hated Ovaltine. It tasted like weak malted milk mixed with metal filings, like something they gave prisoners to keep them docile. To get your membership in the Secret Squadron, though, you had to send Captain Midnight, who seemed to live in Chicago, Illinois, the thin metal foil seal from under the lid of a can of Ovaltine. There was no way around it. Even after I got the can of Ovaltine I had worries. I used to have the notion that if you didn't get that aluminum seal off in one perfect piece the whole Secret Squadron would be upset. Ovaltine promised mothers that it helped children relax.

Once I got my Secret Squadron Book of Official Charts, Codes and Secrets and my official Photo-matic Code-o-graph Badge things brightened. Then I was in a position to take down and decode the messages that Captain Midnight sent me at the end of each show. After the captain and Chuck and Joyce had thwarted Ivan Shark, the villain with the perfect name, the announcer would give out with code. "First word," Pierre Andre would say, "15-6-1-24. Second word, 26-9-6." The message usually was only a nudge toward that lousy Ovaltine, but you couldn't beat the pleasure of setting your Code-o-graph to Code 6 and figuring it out.

For a while Jack Armstrong, the All American Boy, dabbled with aviation. Wheaties billed him as the Famous Boy Aviator when they gave away the Genuine Jack Armstrong Shooting Plane, a circular gyro airplane you could shoot from a gun. Jack Armstrong was another project of Robert Hardy Andrews. Explaining how he thought up the name, Andrews says, "It came off a box of baking soda; the Arm & Hammer brand, trademarked with a mighty bicep flexed for action." Jack was, as Andrews admits, inspired by Frank Merriwell, the Rover Boys and Tom Swift. After Andrews gave up the program, it was written for a time by Talbot Mundy, which probably explains how Jack, Billy, Betty and Uncle Jim, got so far from Hudson High and into Tibet, Indo-China and the elephants' graveyard in Africa.

Jack Armstrong calmed down some in the 40s, when it was written by an editor of the dull *Boy's Life*. One of the premiums offered about then was the Jack Armstrong Bomb Sight. Sinister forces tried to steal it from Jack and Uncle Jim on the show. I sent for one, then tried to figure out what the Axis powers would do with a small black bomb sight that dropped little red wooden bombs.

Then there were the cowboys. Western heroes began to show up on radio early in the 1930's. In Detroit, George W. Trendle, who owned station WXYZ, decided he wanted to compete with the networks with a show about a cowboy with some Robin Hood and Zorro tendencies. Trendle picked the name The Lone Ranger and hired Fran Striker to write for him. The show caught on. The Lone Ranger proved fairly early that there was an interest in premiums in the kid audience. Before the Lone Ranger had even moved onto the network, Trendle offered a free pop gun to the first 300 kids who wrote in.

The offer pulled 25,904 responses. By 1940, when the Ranger was sponsored by seventeen assorted bakeries across the country, a premium offer would draw letters from a million listeners. The Lone Ranger usually offered pretty prosaic premiums, and his idea of an organization was something called the Lone Ranger Safety Club. For real imaginative junk you had to turn to Tom Mix.

In the middle 30s Tom Mix, who had been playing fictitious cowboys in the movies since 1911, was a declining screen hero. He still had his Rolls Royce, he even had a cowboy style tuxedo, but things were not as good as they had been. Then the Ralston Company of Checkerboard Square, St. Louis, Missouri, bought Tom Mix. They created a club and named it the Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters. They put on a Tom Mix radio show, with an actor doing Tom, and got a cartoonist to draw a comic strip. And they started offering premiums. Tom Mix was popular again. So popular that the show stayed on the air for nearly a decade after Mix was killed in a car crash.

The premiums that Tom Mix sent his Ralston Straight Shooters would fill a catalogue. They included a Simulated Gold TM Bar Brand Straight Shooter Badge, just like Tom's and guaranteed to prove you're a special pal of his, and a Lucky TM Bar Ring with a six shooter and a steer's head on the sides, shines like gold, fits any finger, just like the one Tom wears. Tom was pretty bejeweled in the 30s and 40s. He also wore a Special Sun Watch, the kind used by explorers, sailors and hunters to tell time by the sun. Not to mention the Periscope Ring which enabled you to see who was sneaking up behind you without even turning around.

As much as I liked the Tom Mix radio show, with Tom's horse Tony, Wash the cook, and Sheriff Mike Shaw, it was in the Sunday page that I felt you really got to know Tom. The most intimate glimpse was given in a strip offering an exact wooden replica of a six-shooter just like Tom's for 10 cents and one Ralston box top. Along with the picture of the gun and a photo of Tom, the Ralston people printed a diagram of Tom Mix' injuries. "Tom Mix has been blown up once, shot twelve times and injured forty seven times in movie stunting," they explained. "This chart shows the location of some of Tom Mix' injuries. (X marks fractures; circles bullet wounds.)" My favorite wound was L. "Shot through elbow in real stage coach hold-up (1902)." The footnote under the chart of Tom said, "Scars from 22 knife wounds are not indicated." In the days before newspapers printed detailed descriptions of presidential operations this was about as close as you could get to a celebrity.

Another charismatic cowboy leader was Red Ryder, "six feet of red headed trigger lightning." The character, with his sidekick Little Beaver, came from a comic strip created by Fred Harman, the Grandma Moses of cartooning. The Red Ryder show started as a West Coast

operation. When the Lone Ranger defected from one network to another, Red stepped in nationally. This was during World War II and the Red Ryder club was named the Victory Patrol, apparently a low budget operation. At least it was the only outfit that ever put out a paper decoder. The Red Ryder Victory Patrol Badge was made out of some kind of fibreboard and was supposed to glow in the dark. Mine always blacked out about a second after I got my bedroom light clicked off.

The war also brought Little Orphan Annie, the midget conservative, into the fight. Ditching Daddy Warbucks and teaming up with Captain Sparks, Annie formed the Secret Guard for Quaker Sparkies, a cereal so militant it was shot from guns. Among the premiums offered to SG members were an Orphan Annie Magnifying Ring, ideally adaptable to reading the little print in her premium ads, a complete Detecto-Kit and a real 3-power telescope.

Little Orphan Annie had been in the premium doghouse since the early days of the Depression. Back then she and Sandy worked for Ovaltine. Through radio and funnies, Annie devoted years to winning kids and parents over to Ovaltine. The chief premium used was the Little Orphan Annie Mug. The mug was white, made of something called Beetleware. On the front appeared a decalomania of Annie and her dog. There were several versions of the mug. On one Annie says, "Didja ever taste anything so good as Ovaltine? And it's good for yuh too." Sandy replies, "Arf!" A later edition has Annie reflecting, "Jumpin' grasshoppers! You just can't help runnin' for more of anything as good as Ovaltine, eh, Sandy?" Sandy's reply is much as before. Pop oriented antique stores now ask as much as eight dollars for an authenticated Orphan Annie Mug.

All these premiums of my youth I accepted as part of the props and trappings of the time, along with Saturday matinees, gum cards, flexible flyers, the Marx Brothers, Joe Penner and Superman. When I undertook this reminiscence about them, I began wondering why they had started occurring when they did. The explanation is the same as that for a great many of the phenomena of the 1930s. The Depression.

During the Depression it took extra incentives to make people buy. In their search for goads the ad men revived an old established idea. The premium. The first premiums in America had been given away by a soap company in 1851. Those, colored pictures of flowers, had to be sent for with wrappers. The box top, by way of Quaker Oats, didn't come along until the 1870s. The incredible renaissance of the premium in the 1930s was made possible by two new advertising media, radio and the advertising comic strip. Because of the enormous amount of free entertainment provided by the radio, the sets kept selling in the Depression years. In 1930 there were 12 million of them and by 1940 nearly 30 million. The advertising strip had been tried by Grapenuts in 1931, at the suggestion of Hearst's Comic Weekly, to boost sales. This technique worked and most cereal and soap manufacturers started using it.

For a while premiums were absolutely free. In 1933 Duane Jones, an account man with Benton & Bowles, thought up the self-liquidator. Also called a dimer, this

type of premium made advertising men happy because it paid for itself. The ten cents you sent in paid the cost of everything, the premium itself, the postage and handling. Jones' first dimer was an adult premium, free Hollywood garden seeds for a SuperSuds box top and ten cents. 600,000 people wanted that one and the self-liquidation soon spread to the kid premiums. The idea was, as Jones points out, "both colossal and super colossal."

By the middle of the 1930s manufacturers were giving away 500 million dollars worth of premiums. 35% of these went to kids. While we were tearing off a box top and sending it to Battle Creek, Michigan, some hundred or more premium workers were busy hustling the cereal and soap makers. Twice a year, in the spring in Chicago and in the fall in New York, there were national premium expositions. The premium inventors set up displays of their newest ideas and several hundred scouts showed up to haggle. For some plants, premiums were only a sideline. The Robbins Company, which had originally dealt in jewelry, found they could grow rich by specializing in kid novelties. It was the Robbins Company that made most of the special rings and decoders.

Sometimes a premium was made to order but more often a scout bought a ready made one and then tried to figure out how to switch it to fit his product. In 1936 the Post cereal scout became fascinated with a scarab ring. Post's wheat cereal Post-O started offering the ring in a Sunday comic about Professor Post's Time Ray. This Sacred Scarab Good Luck Ring didn't go over and in 1937 there were still a lot of them piled up. The Junior G-Men were called in to help. Post offered the ring all over again. This time calling it the Melvin Purvis Sacred Scarab Good Luck Ring. Then they gave up.

The premium business continued to grow. Premium expositions drew larger crowds, while premium people entertained scouts with extravaganzas like "The Premium Madcaps of 1937." Along with this a strong anti-premium movement got going. PTA's and groups such as the National Council for Youth Entertainment started attacking kid programs, premiums and the unholy box top. The American Mercury denounced premiums, saying, "It is difficult to understand how a pirate's mask or a *papier-maché* Tommy gun can stir cultural longings."

Kid premiums held on, though, surviving attacks and wartime restrictions. Even Ralston's decision, inspired by a new advertising agency, to stop all premiums in the mid-1950s didn't slow down the trade. Today 2½ billion dollars worth of premiums a year clutter the mails, a good percentage still going to kids. In the vaster super markets you can still find two dozen cereal boxes that have a premium inside or a coupon for one on the back.

Premium prices have gone up and the mystery and romance, particularly the Secret Squadron mystique, have gone out of fashion. There are still some eternal kid premium verities. A couple of months ago my son decided he wanted the Atomic Submarine USN-Seawolf shown on the back of his cereal box. We sent in the money and the box top and waited. Sure enough, the submarine took five weeks to get to us. When we tried it out in the bathtub it didn't work.

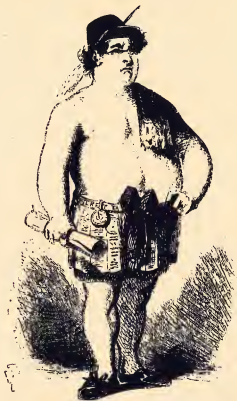
# DEPARTMENT OF YELLOWED JOURNALISM

*by S. Harris*

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*. Our brave reporter*

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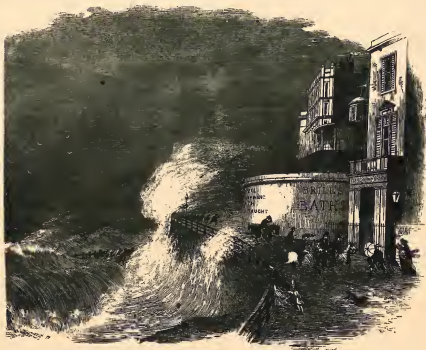


*Braving dust, mildew, pressed flowers,  
and other perils, intrepid P. S. correspon-  
dent Sidney Harris gave a little laugh  
and a brave toss of his head and plunged  
from a forty foot ladder into a randomly  
selected pile of decaying periodicals. A  
fortnight later he emerged, smudged but  
triumphant, with the following (next page)  
records of little-known oddities and calam-  
itous events clutched in his begrimed hands.*

*This wisdom must not die.*



*John K. Mosby (center), a fugitive from justice, armed with a masterfully trained fox carrying a hypnotic device, holds pursuers at bay. The fox, by swinging the mysterious tool in his mouth, puts both men and beasts in a deep trance, enabling Mosby to escape and further pursue his heinous career.*



*A ship carrying an effervescent seltzer powder for stomach distress overturned just as it was about to land at dock. The cargo thereupon got wet, and excessive alkali fizz caused severe damage to persons and property.*



*Four prisoners of Dr. Fu Manchu are trapped in a huge chamber with a beautifully carved ceiling, which is slowly lowering upon their heads. They are frantically looking for a way to stop this inexorable force. A seeming escape hatch with ladder to floor below actually leads to a fate worse than death.*



*Dr. Hamilton Dunfries, noted oceanographer, is seen seated in a large tub, lecturing to his colleagues. Living among aquatic and amphibious creatures for many years and partaking of their diet has exacted its toll.*



THE



LION

*It wasn't the Sistine Chapel, but then he wasn't Michelangelo.*

*by Nicholas Breckenridge*



In the New York advertising, publishing, television, and free-lance painting and writing world, sooner or later everyone moves to Westport. Or Greenwich, or Northern Westchester, or, less chic, New Jersey or Long Island.

My parents were part of the first wave of commercial artists and writers to venture north, in the 1920's. These days I listen to a lot of free-lance writers and artists who whimper about the sad and debased uses to which they must put their talents in order to pay off the mortgage, and who shudder over the ferocious whims of clients and producers and account executives.

I smile. They think they have it tough? When I grew up out there, we had a depression. The free-lancer *really* had to live by his wits. I cite my very own father, who was an artist specializing in realistic illustrations of wild life. For many lean years, he managed to maintain the family in a succession of reasonably livable houses in northern Westchester county on a wildly unpredictable income. He painted roosters on the barns and garages of more fortunate friends; he painted loathesomely cute kit-

tens for cat food labels; he illustrated children's books about boats, a mode of conveyance he abhorred. Virtually all this cheerless drudgery was accomplished for very little pay, and it often involved numerous painstaking revisions to satisfy the whim of a client. I remember the toughest client of all, and I've yet to meet the TV producer or editor or agency man who could be considered in the same league.

One summer day in 1933 he was sitting on the back porch, which constituted his summer studio, working on a jacket for a new edition of one of the "Bomba, the Jungle Boy" books. The story was laid in the Amazon river basin, and the publisher's art director had asked for a picture of Bomba astride a hippopotamus. The art director knew there were no hippos in South America, but he had run through all the headhunter and alligator

and piranha situations on other jackets, and he wanted a change of pace. My father, a conscientious man, read the book, at least up to the point where Bomba got trapped in the swamp of death, the miasma of which was so foul that to breathe its fumes was to die. As he bent over his drawing board, he hummed "Ja Da", and presently lyrics emerged.

"Bomba, Bomba, that wonderful jungle boy

"Bomba, Bomba, you are my pride and joy

"If you want to see Bomba, you'll have to hold your breath

"He's wadin' around in the swamp of death

"Bomba, Bomba, that wonderful jungle b-h-hoy-y-y."

Perhaps another verse would have been forthcoming, but the telephone rang in the kitchen, and he got up to answer it.

The caller said he was Mr. Fluegel, and was my father the artist? Mr. Fluegel asked if he might come and visit that evening to discuss the painting of a mural for his house in Greenwich. Somehow, he made it clear that he had more than one house. My father told the caller to come at his convenience, and gave him directions for finding our house.

It was still light when a big new blue Lincoln pulled up in the driveway. As the driver got out, his gold cufflinks and diamond ring seemed to flash in code as he shut the car door and straightened his necktie. The code said *Money*. Mr. Fluegel was an imposing-looking man in his fifties. His shoes and hair were shiny, but his blue suit had no shine at all. He introduced himself in a sort of rasping, executive voice, and promptly launched into an account of what he wanted, or what he didn't want. What he really wanted was not exactly a mural, he said, but more like a hand-painted wallpaper. My father winced.

Mr. Fluegel paced the porch. "I don't want anything too arty, understand," he said nervously, "but nothing common, either." He explained that he had converted the basement of his house into a game room and bar. While he didn't claim to know much about art, he knew what he liked, and what he liked was something with class. "Nothing too freehand, more of a design, you know?" He started to sweat with the effort of articulating his wants. "I've tried all the wallpaper companies," Mr. Fluegel said. "I must have looked at a thousand samples, but I want something heavier, something with the feel of a hand-done thing, something . . ." he moved his hands in a helpless basket-like gesture in an attempt to express the unexpressible.

"Something like a tapestry?"

"Sort of that," Mr. Fluegel said. "Yes, like in castles."

"Let's see," my father said, "something on canvas, something distinctive."

"That's it, that's right! Distinctive."

The relationship between artist and patron has always, I suppose, been a delicate one. My father wanted to please this obviously affluent man who had gone to the trouble of seeking him out, and he surely needed work, but he was used to dealing with people who had, or at least thought they had, a somewhat clearer idea of their own wants, and he was wary of amateurs, so he started to ask basic questions.

"How big is the surface to be covered?"

"I want it to stretch around three sides of the room."

Mr. Fluegel took a piece of paper from his shirt pocket. "Ten feet eight inches high by sixty-eight feet four and a half inches long."

My father pursed his lips and flexed the fingers of his painting hand. "How much were you counting on paying, Mr. Fluegel?"

Mr. Fluegel hemmed and hawed and cleared his throat. "I don't really know values in your field," he said. "They tell me you're good. I was figuring on maybe two thousand dollars."

This was more money than my father had seen in a long time, but six hundred and eighty square feet of canvas was more bare space than he'd had to contend with for a long time, too.

"Maybe twenty-five hundred," Mr. Fluegel said.

"To paint over that much space by hand, to paint some sort of design, would take me—take any artist—months and months and months. Why, Michelangelo—"

"But I don't really want a *picture*," the man said.

"What you want is sort of a hand-painted canvas wallpaper, eh?" my father said. "With class?"

"That's it, something distinctive."

My father sat at his drawing board and thought awhile, doodling on a pad of tracing paper, occasionally looking out the window to the man's car, which, I had noticed, was equipped with a custom-built body.

Then, as Mr. Fluegel paced the floor, searching for a way to narrow down his desires, Dad bent over and began to draw purposefully.

"What's your favorite color?" he asked after a few moments. "Blue?"

"Why, I suppose it is." Mr. Fluegel seemed quite pleased at being found out.

Dad took up a stick of blue pastel crayon and worked over the tracing paper with the flat of it. "How does this strike you?" he asked, and Mr. Fluegel and I bounded

over to look past his shoulder. On the tracing paper was a sketch of a stylized lion, rearing decoratively. Over its head was the outline of a crown, and, while we watched, Dad opened a jar of gold paint, dipped a brush in it and filled in the crown. "Now I was thinking of a series of these, facing left and right in staggered rows... so" And he drew miniatures of the lion along the edge of the paper. "Each one about eight inches high, blue and gold on a cream-colored canvas."

"That might be it!" Mr. Fluegel said. "God knows, it's distinctive. Like, like a *coat of arms*!"

"Of course, I'll have to do them from a stencil. Otherwise it would take me two years."

A faint whisp of cloud passed over Mr. Fluegel's face at this, but the more he gazed at the lion, the more he seemed to approve of it. "Could it be done in a month?" he asked.

"No. Two months, maybe."

"Okay," Mr. Fluegel said. "Sold!" The price was set, hands were shaken, and Mr. Fluegel left as dusk was falling.

During the next week, my father really rose to the occasion. He hired a three-car garage which was about the size of the client's game room. The couple living over the garage had a motorcycle, which did not occupy a significant amount of space. Next, Dad located two huge pieces of canvas at a ship chandler's in lower Manhattan and arranged for them to be trucked out to the garage. Next, he etched a lion into a sheet of copper, and a crown into a smaller sheet, and had them cut into stencils at a friend's machine shop. Renting tall stepladders from a housepainter, he hired a man to help him erect a frame and stretch the canvas on it. He sized the whole thing, and spent two days painting the canvas cream color. The next few days were spent marking it off with carefully-spaced dots.

Then he mixed his paints and commenced.

Slowly, the lions appeared, marching up and down the canvas in orderly rows. I would carry his lunch over to the garage, and occasionally in those early weeks I would be allowed to help by holding the stencil in place while he painted over it. After each use, the stencil had to be cleaned and placed in exact position, all one row facing left, all the next facing right.

Mr. Fluegel called to say he had invited a large number of guests to the unveiling. The canvas would be ready in time, wouldn't it. Dad urged him to drive over and take a look, but Mr. Fluegel declined, saying he wanted to be surprised.

Difficulties developed. The couple living over the garage became ill from the smell of the paint, and tried to make my father move the canvas elsewhere. My father, who had no contract with them, gave them a hundred dollars to move to another house for the duration. A batch of the gold paint dried the wrong color, and it proved very difficult to expunge.

I got to do more and more of the work as the completion date approached. One evening, looking over my handiwork my heart gave a great, frightened thump as I saw a lion which I'd stencilled that day was facing in the wrong direction. The symmetry of that whole side of the garage was destroyed. The lion seemed to leap out at me accusingly. My father hadn't noticed it, and for the next few days and nights the wrong-way lion filled me with guilt.

Somehow I couldn't summon up the nerve to speak to Dad. He was growing short of time, and, as that diminished, so did his good temper. I was ten, and my intuition told me to wait for a better time. My father was constitutionally unable to mix large batches of paint, and each batch was minutely different in hue from the last. While the contrast was unnoticeable in the great procession around the garage, the color we were working in now would stand out, I realized, if it were used to re-do a lion way back where we were working a week ago.

It seemed to me my father must be blind not to notice it, but he was too occupied with filling the remaining yards of canvas with other lions, and cursing himself for not having cut more stencils and hiring some people to help him; but he had always worked alone, and it would have offended his sense of craftsmanship to set up an assembly line; using me was enough of a concession to technology. Also, he sensed that Mr. Fluegel's personality might lead to trouble. "I don't like that business of his wanting to be surprised," Dad grumbled. "I should have gotten him to sign something."

As the days wore on, it became more and more difficult for me to confess. Besides, the lion had been done so long ago that Dad might think he'd made the mistake himself.

Mr. Fluegel called again, on Tuesday evening of the last week. He was coming by with a truck on Friday afternoon. It would be all ready, and dry, would it not?

In retrospect, those next few days must have approximated the agony endured by Egyptian slaves putting the finishing touches on a pyramid in time to accommodate a dying pharaoh. Our sweat dripped into the paint, my arms trembled from holding the stencil up against the canvas while my father painted the lion.



"Let's switch off and do crowns," I'd croak when I felt my arms would drop. On we went, row upon row, right left, right left, and at every halt, my eye would fall guiltily on the wrong-way lion. At night I dreamed of lions and crowns. By day, the world was a swirl of paint, fumes and heat. Then, on Friday, late in the morning, it was finished. The lions vibrated in the heat. I had almost screwed up my courage to the point of showing him the backward lion when I noticed his hand was trembling quite violently as he sprayed fixative over the canvas. I had never seen his hand tremble so before. I decided to keep silent a little longer.

We turned at the sound of two engines coming up the driveway. Mr. Fluegel's blue Lincoln appeared, followed by a truck.

"He's early" I said in panic.

"It's all right with me. The sooner I get this monster off my hands, the better," my father said grimly.

Then Mr. Fluegel was silhouetted in the entrance. "Well!" he boomed. His eyes were unaccustomed to the shade of the garage. He rubbed them and stepped closer. He looked around, saying nothing. A worry line appeared in his forehead, and he started making those helpless basket-like gestures with his hands. He walked along the canvas, brightening slightly at the sign of a brush mark, nodding approval at a crown slightly askew.

"It's all so—so *perfect*," he said finally. "I mean, I agreed to it, but I expected . . . I mean, with the lighting I've got in my game room, people aren't going to be able to tell it's hand-painted."

"Well," my father said grimly, "you didn't want anything arty."

"There's something I meant to tell you," I said to my father, only the words made no sound.

"Damn it, it looks *printed*!"

"Mr. Fluegel," I said.

"I know you used a stencil, but I didn't expect . . ." Mr. Fluegel trailed off.

My father's face was getting quite red. I could see twenty-five hundred dollars taking wing.

"Mr. Fluegel," I said loudly, "look over here." I pointed to the wrong-way lion. He was quiet for a moment, as he looked up and down the surrounding rows. Then it dawned on him.

"It's out of line," he whispered. "It should be facing the other way." He started to smile. "Perfect," he said softly, shaking his head. "Genius." He laughed out loud. "Just the touch. Why, no wallpaper in the world . . . why, my guests . . ." There seemed to be tears in his eyes as he turned and wrung my father's hand. "Great!" he said. Then he rushed to the doorway. "*Men!*" he cried happily, and three workmen disembarked from the truck and came into the garage.

"You know how you can tell that's hand-painted?" Mr. Fluegel asked them. He rushed over and pointed at the wrong-way lion. "*That's* how!"

The men looked around. "Son of a gun," one of them said. "It's facing the wrong way."

My father supervised the men taking the canvas down from its frame. It was folded, rolled, and the six of us carried the two pieces out to the truck.

Mr. Fluegel shook hands with Dad several more times, wrote a large check, and departed ahead of the truck, honking.

And so the lions passed forever from our sight. I like to think the strange mural still graces someone's game room, and if it hasn't been painted over with nudes or monkeys or a decorator color, perhaps a guest occasionally discovers the wrong-way lion in the small hours. I hope it gives him pleasure.







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would have had  
the cruelty to walk  
out on that man..."

"What's the secret?  
You were his boyhood friend...  
why didn't he ever catch on?"

"Aren't you going to  
answer the door?"  
"I'm not expecting anybody."

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## The Papers— They Publish Her Face

*The society page—a fairy tale for gownups*

*by Gerald Carson*

IT is a truth universally acknowledged that most people find it pleasant to see their own names in print. The next best option is to read about the affairs of those who live a fashionable and public life, especially if the tale is spiced with jaunty anecdote.

When the first tabloid newspaper appeared in New York it promised its readers a bountiful feast of news and gossip about the rich and powerful because, as volume one, number one, of today's mighty *Daily News* put it, "the doings of the very fortunate are always of interest." Even the murders were classified by tab editors as "classy cases" and "cheap cases." What constituted class? When a vivacious blonde was fatally shot, if the story involved beauty, yachts and racing stables—it was a classy case. The new journalism of the 1920's re-discovered the values developed earlier by Colonel William D'Alton Mann, whose *Town Topics* went about as far as it was possible to go in gossiping about "the fun of distributing an apparently endless income," or the husband of "frisky disposition", identified as a member of an Old New York family, a graduate of Princeton who "belongs to all the clubs." In the day of the two-line joke, HE asked, "Don't you like to read that column in one of the daily papers called 'Live Topics About Town?'" To which SHE replied, "Yes; but I like better to read *Town Topics* about Life".



Newspaper attention to conspicuous coteries known at various times over the last hundred years as the *beau monde*, the bon ton, the *recherché*, the Smart Set, the international set, café society and latterly the jet set, has ranged from a dignified "court gazette" style of reportage to back-stairs revelations and pungent satire. In the course of these diurnal duties, the newspapers have done much to accentuate a sense of pageantry and aristocratic privilege by publishing accounts of the balls and parties of selected groups, repeating their names and ascribing to them an awe-inspiring authority. Society has been our substitute for royalty.

Society news has been read by two distinct publics, those who were or conceivably might become a part of the ballet, and those who knew well enough that the world of the fashion-plate ladies and their escorts was beyond their grasp. But the commonalty can stand near the marquises with the photographers, watch beside the steps of chic churches and enjoy the obsequious prose of the society columns where they meet in a Roseland of the imagination those who live out the fairy tale.

The idea of introducing into a newspaper a department devoted to the life of glitter was the invention of the clever but raffish James Gordon Bennett, who founded his penny newspaper, the *New York Herald*, in 1835. It was bold, piquant, filled with Mephistophelian laughter. The *Herald* printed accounts of the pomp and circumstance of New York's worldlings, including lavish private fetes, marriages and deaths, but not births. Complete candor as to biological events awaited the arrival upon the journalistic scene of Walter Winchell. Bennett described his coverage of society news possibly with tongue in cheek, as being designed "to bring out the graces, the polish, the elegancies, the bright and airy attributes of social life..." and coyly printed only the first and last letters of proper names with intriguing dashes in between. But the mailed fist was always potentially present in the form of barbed paragraphs capable of making a hostess think twice about brushing off a *Herald* reporter. And the newspapers had other weaponry in their arsenals if they cared to employ them—overt abuse, ridicule and, worst of all, silence.

The publisher of the *Herald* set a pattern by revealing intimate details of his own life. Bennett described lyrically the charms of his prospective bride, her mind, heart, figure, manners and net worth. The *Herald* was a pioneer in noticing the arrival of ships carrying newsworthy passengers, took the names of guests off the register of the Astor House "since obviously," Dixon Wecter wrote, "anybody able to pay \$2 a day for a room must be a person of consequence."

A peculiarly lush, finger-in-the-mouth style was invented to heighten the drama of the social scramble—unidiomatic and decorated with euphemisms. Sons of wealthy families were scions. French phrases were used lavishly to add a note of exclusiveness. A reception became a *soirée*. The ladies' attire was always *soignée*. Meade Minnegerode in his *Fabulous Forties*, culled an ecstatic report from a New York newspaper of the period, not identified but quite possibly the *New York Herald*, dealing with an event honoring a Miss C., whose last

name was too exquisite to be disclosed, but whose address was 473 Broadway. There she lived in an elegant granite mansion, revolving genteelly in a social circle which was "one of the richest and purest in town." The affair being described was a private dance. The reporter, almost overcome by the charm and solvency of the women present, could only convey the social atmosphere by writing "At a fair valuation about \$4,500,000 of property in stocks and real estate at present price were represented by the fair ones present."

Rudimentary beginnings of society journalism may be discerned in manuscripts which were passed around discreetly at the court of Louis XIV, a kind of forerunner of the "Washington letter" technique of distributing reputedly inside information and wild surmise. In the London of the eighteenth century the news sheets circulated in the coffee houses reported upon the movements of the royal family, hinting of high-jinks among the lords and ladies. Early news sheets of our own colonial period, when mentioning those who practiced the graces, introduced the unctuous stock phrases which were later, through hard usage, to reach the stage of complete exhaustion.

After the Civil War the new "comfort" classes in prosperous towns and small cities imitated the manners of the elite of the metropolitan cities. The weddings and anniversaries of a popular druggist or leading grocer, for example, were reported in flowery detail with full lists of the presents received and names of the donors down to the last pillow sham, toothpick holder, pickle fork and napkin ring. Often the personal items and advertisements were commingled and had to be sorted out by the alert reader; as when a couple, just married in southern Michigan, might find the account of the nuptials appearing in the *Battle Creek Daily Moon* entwined with the news that "Scrofula lurks in the blood of nearly every one, but Hood's Sarsaparilla drives it from the system and makes pure blood." Since scrofula was a medical term popularly used as an euphemism for venereal infection, the newlyweds might have felt understandably annoyed.

The appeal of social news was essentially feminine. Once this point was established, the more important newspapers usually, although not invariably, employed women editors in their society departments. Women were found to be accurate in describing costumes, apt in dealing with local genealogy, alert to the existence of feuds and scandals. Best of all, the sisters of the press had a feeling for when to pull out the stops and sound the lark notes.

When the West was wild, pistol-packing editors often published burlesques of conventional social reporting. A Missouri wedding was reported as having taken place "between a hazel thicket and the wagon" and the same editor reported in the next year—it was 1858—that "a society of Free Lovers has been organized on the Neosho, in the Southern part of Kansas..." They all take the *New York Tribune*. Similarly, the Dodge City *Times* gave a facetious account of a pair of the town's B-girls: "Miss Frankie Bell and one of her associates were deposited in the dog house this afternoon." The reporter went

on to identify Frankie as the lady who earlier in the summer had used language which so offended the chaste ears of Wyatt Earp, the notorious gunslinger, that he had felt obliged to box her ears. It cost him a dollar in police court, but was undoubtedly worth it.

The same newspaper, in the rowdy days of the cattle drives, did a take-off on the descriptions of the ladies' costumes at exclusive affairs. The *Post* back in Washington, D.C. could write with bated breath of the wife of John Wanamaker, the merchant and postmaster-general in the administration of President Benjamin Harrison: "Mrs. Wanamaker wore a gown of silver gray satin and velvet, with silver passementeries forming a deep bertha to the square-neck corsage, on which the vest of white lace was outlined in sable." But when a "hop" was held at the Dodge House in Dodge City, a Mr. I.G.J., the newspaper said, "wore his elegant blond moustache a la gin sling, and was tastefully arrayed in arctic overshoes with collar buttons and studs".

In small town America, social news was generally regarded as too important to be trifled with. So it was when a country scribe wrote "The Knights of Pythias received thirty new uniforms for their grand parade on Easter Sunday." And so it is today when it is still a matter of keen interest locally to know that the Walkerville, Montana, Volunteer Fire Department met at Community Hall, gave the pledge to the flag and recited the official prayer. For a hundred years the heart-beat of the "country correspondence" has not faltered. Modern social ramifications, even the rise of the labor union movement, have only served to strengthen the interest in neighborly social news. Announcements about the Sewing Club and the Hobby Club appear regularly in the regional publications of the AFL-CIO unions, of potluck suppers with bingo afterward, of bake and rummage sales, of engagements and items reporting distinctions, such as the news reported in the *Kansas City Labor Beacon* of how Mrs. Anita Kirby, Milgram Food chain checker and a member of the Retail Store Employees Local 782, was named "Checker of the Year."

"When the girl at the glove-counter marries the boy in the wholesale house, the news of their wedding is good for a forty-line wedding notice, and the forty lines in the country paper give them self-respect," wrote William Allen White, of the *Emporia Gazette*. "When in due course we know that their baby is a twelve-pounder, named Grover or Theodore or Woodrow, we have that neighborly feeling that breeds real democracy. . . . When we see them moving upward in the world . . . out toward the country club neighborhood, we rejoice with them that rejoice."

"Our social activities," White continued, "tell of real people . . . We know a gown when it appears three seasons in our society columns . . . it becomes a familiar friend." "Boston people," he said, "pick up their morning papers and read . . . without that fine thrill that we have when we hear that Al Ludorff is in jail again . . . For we all know Al . . ." And so it was, and is, with the joys and heartaches of this life, and the little meannesses, too. The subscribers could read between the lines. They understood who was snubbed when the list of

wedding guests was made up, who stood outside the bereaved home after the funeral service "waiting to see the mourning families, and to be seen by them." Readers could make an educated guess as to how much insurance the dead man carried. Often it was not necessary to speculate upon the matter. The local newspaper supplied the information as a matter of legitimate public interest.

Daily newspapers in the 1880's did not observe the standards which mark their society pages now. The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, for one, was definitely the tribune of the people, and mixed in items about Mrs. Washington McLean's gown when she entertained ex-President and Mrs. U. S. Grant with the news that "Mr. Thomas Flaherty, foreman of the Little Miami Railroad Shops, will give a birthday party to his friends on the 20th." Similarly, the *Chicago Tribune* kept an eye not only on the Farwells and McCormicks, but also noticed the grand ball of the Liquor-Dealers' Protective Association at the North Side Turner Hall where G. L. Ritzhaupt, popular salooner and wife, led the grand march, followed by aldermen Kowalski and Costello, Ernest Hummel and T. Hogan.

When Joseph Pulitzer took over the languishing *New York World* and instilled new vigor into the society department, there were no telephones, no press agents on hand to supply, as Ishbel Ross has said, "the poundage of the wedding cake." It called for reportorial enterprise to tell the *World's* feminine readers about who wore an emerald tiara or a diamond choker at the opening of the opera season. William Randolph Hearst, invading New York in 1895 with the purchase of the *New York Journal*, made the society columns increasingly pert. His staffers portrayed the society world as one inhabited by ordinary failible people. But they had steam yachts. Hearst began the now-familiar custom of first-naming social figures. Mrs. Herman Oelrichs became "Tessie". Thousands knew Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish as "Mayme". The mass media had made a valuable discovery—that tales of frivolity, social jostling for position and "conspicuous consumption", as Thorstein Veblen termed it, were excellent bait for inducing readers to part with their penny.

Most society editors have labored in anonymity, but Anna Bolton Ellis is remembered in New Orleans for her years of service on the *Times-Picayune*. At the turn of the century, Mrs. Marshall Darrach, writing under the nom de plume of Lady Teazle, gave a distinctive touch to the *San Francisco Chronicle's* reports on the activities of the descendants of the old bonanza kings. It was in conversation with a society reporter that Ward McAllister remarked, "There are only four hundred people in New York that one really knows." The term "the four hundred" caught the public's fancy, became a part of the American language at a time when great stress was laid upon the competitive entertainments of rival leaders. They were few enough in numbers so that it was possible to publish the names of the boxholders and their guests in the parterre at the Metropolitan Opera House, not only on opening night but on every subscription night throughout the season.

The czarina of all society editors, past and present, she who reigned and ruled, was Miss Marion Devereaux of



Cincinnati, eulogist of the well-born, whose embroidered rhetoric was merely the outward expression of an extraordinary drive to power. Miss Devereux was the Dun & Bradstreet of Cincinnati society. No young girl was an authentic debutante unless the tiny, frail woman whose office was the clearing house for society's business, said she was. By the time Miss Devereux slipped into the editorial chair at the *Enquirer*, the newspapers of the United States had learned that a little judicious buttering-up of a prominent matron created good will among valued advertisers. And hostesses had learned the power of the press to chastise.

Miss Devereux understood how to capitalize these opportunities. Her father, originally from Boston, was Arthur Forester Devereux, a Civil War brigadier and a government engineer at Cincinnati after the war. The editor of the *Commercial*, Murat Halstead, persuaded Mrs. Devereux, a woman of education and cultivation, to handle society news for his paper. Called Madame because of her French-sounding name, she survived several newspaper consolidations, perfected her own techniques of praise and punishment, edited *Mrs. Devereux's Blue Book of Cincinnati*, a *Society Register* and *Convenient Reference Book*. Mrs. Devereux handed her portfolio on to her daughter, Marion, when she retired in 1910. Marion, burnished in two fashionable schools, with a fluent command of ladies' seminary French, became adept in the art of gush and in skirting the law of libel when she wanted to enforce discipline. Mrs. So-and-So, she wrote, "appeared in a lovely bead necklace." She would bring a young matron down the pole fast enough by noticing her absence from the social scene, and explaining, "But of course she is not going out in any large way at present." Or she could give just a playful little tap of warning: "Mrs. B.—wore the green dress in which she always looks so well."

When an important ball or wedding was coming up on the social calendar, Miss Devereux set the date, named the hotel or country club where the function would be held, and her word was final. If society reporting is, as some newspaper men have privately defined it, "the art of saying the least in the most possible words," then Miss Devereux was the champ. A competitor, the *Cincinnati Post*, once paid her the tribute of saying "when better participles are dangled, it is safe to say Miss Devereux will dangle them." She carolled and she twittered. Debutantes were "rosebuds." If there were two in the same family, they were "twin rosebuds on the parent stem". A table was "the mahogany". Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson, who was in Miss Devereux's good graces, was always "very distinguished", and Mrs. Henry Probasco, "very Grande Dame". The Hinkle box was "a scene of constant va and vient". The ladies who made up Cincinnati society were, collectively, Femina: "For this supreme occasion, Femina had resplendently arrayed herself in some of the most scintillatingly exquisite creations evoked by the coutourier's wand of enchantment."

When Miss Devereux died in 1948, the *Enquirer* remarked retrospectively of the tiny ink-queen's contributions to the sub-literature of the United States:

"Her endless sentences, complex processions of high-

flown writing in which modified modifiers were modified by modified modifiers, compelled the awe of the shop girls and the dowagers, college professors and high school students, who read her column. The spangles of phrases in French and exquisites in English which glittered through the paragraphs added dazzle to opulence."

But the women of Cincinnati ate up what has been called "Devereux English" and asked for more. All limitations on space ceased so far as Marion Devereux's department was concerned. Often a single weekday's society news might run to sixteen full columns or two pages of coruscant prose which Alvin Harlow said tinkled like "small, sweetly-attuned bells in a mauve-tinted, heliotrope-scented atmosphere." Perhaps one specimen culled at random will suffice to demonstrate what this indefatigable chronicler of the Best People could pack into a sentence:

"Saturday night's affair was therefore a tribute to this long friendship, the plans for it having been made before Mr. Blank left last spring for Washington and, later, for London, where he was best man at the wedding of the daughter of the Count and Countess Szecheanyi (Gladys Vanderbilt), a brilliant event in the English capital, where the bride's father holds the distinguished post which, until the last year or so, he filled with such distinction in the United States—that of ambassador of his native Hungary, of which his house is one of the most ancient in that land of the Magyars." Miss Devereux was, obviously, a character. She created a unique role for herself, and a whole city accepted it, sometimes to its considerable inconvenience. Upper-case Cincinnatians, one can speculate, enjoy anecdotes about Miss Marion, but would not willingly look upon her like again.

With the association between Publicity and Position well established, the endorsement of commercial products by ladies of social consequence reached its fullest expression after World War I. The idea was old enough. A hundred years before, an advertising throwaway was distributed in New York by a dry goods store on lower Ninth Avenue, with a picture showing the exclusive Miss Julia Gardiner of the Long Island Gardiners, strolling in front of the store carrying on her arm a small sign, shaped like a lady's hand bag. It carried the commercial message:

"I'll purchase at Bogert and Mecamy's, No. 86 Ninth Avenue. Their goods are Beautiful and Astonishingly Cheap." There was a caption, "Rose of Long Island", on this possibly first sale of her name by a New York lady of quality. The Gardiner family shopped, as a matter of fact, at A. T. Stewart's. But Professor Robert Seager II, biographer of Julia's future husband, President John Tyler, thinks there is no doubt but that Miss Gardiner posed for the picture or authorized its use.

Other instances come to mind of similar arrangements later in the nineteenth century. The famous preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, lent his name to the promotion of sewing machines, pianos, Pears' Soap, a patent medicine and a truss. Mrs. James Brown Potter, wife of a nephew of the august Bishop Henry Godman Potter, spoke out for Harriet Hubbard Ayer's Cold Cream on her fashion-

(continued)



*"Twenty years ago, something like that might very well have saved  
my marriage."*

able Tuxedo Park notepaper. On the contrary, Mrs. Potter Palmer of Chicago, was definitely unhappy when a brewery used her photograph to cheer up a calendar advertising beer.

Bertha Honoré Palmer, wife of the merchant and real estate operator, had brought big-time Society to Chicago and ruled her demesne from the glass-domed mansion on Lake Shore Drive. She had attended the coronation of Czar Nicholas II in Moscow, entertained the Prince of Wales at the Palmer ranch in Wyoming. Presidents Grant, Garfield and McKinley had eaten off Mrs. Palmer's gold plates. As President of the Board of Lady Managers of the World's Columbian Exposition, Mrs. Palmer drove the golden nail at the dedication of the Woman's Building in 1893 while the audience gave the Chautauqua salute and all sang "America". Yet Mrs. Palmer could not escape the beer calendar since Illinois had no statute covering the right of privacy. The reply to her protests was that her face and fame were a public possession: "Greatness is death to privacy . . ." affirmed *The Western Brewer*.

Pond's Cream moved into high society in 1924 when Mrs. O.H.P. Belmont agreed to do an advertisement. By the end of the decade a long list of names carrying associations with the great world—Roosevelt, Astor, Gould, Du Pont, a countess or so, The Lady Iris Mountbatten—were appearing regularly in the advertisements, from *Harper's Bazaar* to *True Confessions*, revealing that Pond's Cold Cream was a necessity of life among the exquisites. History came full circle when a Mrs. Potter d'Orsay Palmer, grand daughter-in-law of the Mrs. Palmer, posed with her Camel cigarette. It was a brand preference which she shared in the slick magazines with Mrs. Rufus Paine Spalding III, who was seen everywhere at Pasadena, Santa Barbara or at the exciting opening nights of New York shows; also with Mrs. Anthony J. Drexel III of Philadelphia for whom emphysema held no fears, and Mrs. Nicholas G. Penniman III of Baltimore, Mrs. Louis Swift, Jr., of Chicago, Mrs. J. Gardner Coolidge, 2nd of Boston and Mrs. Thomas M. Carnegie, Jr., of New York. It may be observed that the young women who leased out their photographs and their husbands' prestigious family names had often acquired them through marriage to juniors, seconds or thirds, or, on occasion, multiple retreats.

In the 1920's and 30's the testimonial became a potent enculturating device as manipulated by the far-flung J. Walter Thompson Company, an advertising agency which maintained a fully-staffed "personality" department for entwining potent names with potent products. "Get the Pope!" Sam Meek, a Thompson vice-president once said to Miss Lucile Platt, head of the Personality Department. Miss Platt failed. But it was a glorious failure, for she procured a legal release from the Most Reverend Samuel A. Stritch, of Chicago, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the philosopher John Dewey and George Bernard Shaw.

Changes in the world and in our national life since the 1940's have depreciated the value of the old society names on the testimonial bourse, while the rising market on show-business personalities has beat the Dow-Jones

averages. But there was a flutter in 1960 when Mrs. Alfred Vanderbilt modelled a nightie for *Harper's Bazaar* with a sleepy-time hair-do. It was all very lady-like; "about as naughty", commented the *New York Herald-Tribune's* Eugenia Sheppard, "as a potato sack". The appearance of this photograph may or may not have been a shattering event in our social history. But it did provide something to talk about at formal dinner parties and had the professional models, who customarily double their fees if asked to pose in lingerie, batting their false eyelashes over the unexpected competition.

There is now in existence a code of ethics to guide those who are socially important and may wish to turn intangible values into hard cash. It has been spelled out by the authority on etiquette, Miss Amy Vanderbilt.

"Many of the most conservative people in the country," Miss Vanderbilt says, "now consider it acceptable to endorse a commercial product for either money or publicity" but "the boundaries of good taste should never be overstepped." Miss Vanderbilt offers an example of where to draw the line. Parents and grandparents may be brought in—tastefully—"but preferably not without their knowledge and consent if they are living." If dead, they can just whirl in their graves. Miss Vanderbilt might, as a matter of fact, have put the case for notifying the living even more strongly than she did. In this instance good taste is backed up by legal penalties. In a number of states, New York to name one, there are tough statutes covering the commercial exploitation of living persons without their consent. The products which people who move in exclusive circles may praise for a consideration include: foods, liquors, cosmetics, cigarettes, home furnishings, cars, radios, musical instruments and various means of transportation. Still considered canaille are depilatories, mouth washes, tooth pastes, foundation garments, underwear, stockings, and patent medicines.

"If you endorse products, use them," Miss Vanderbilt cautions, "or at least possess them for possible use."

Here ordinary prudence comes to the aid of a refined taste. For there is always the possibility of some patrician lady, very *distinguée*, finding herself tangled up in a quite unpleasant Federal Trade Commission proceeding conducted by an ungallant examiner who often permits the government attorneys to pursue a perfectly horrid line of interrogation.

Somewhere in between Family and Money lies American Society or what is left of it. And publicity has come to exercise a profound effect among the fashionables since they have learned that family and money mean little unless generally recognized. Society has adjusted to the facts of life and found it rather fun. Marie Manning, who originated the Beatrice Fairfax column, states flatly, "It was all bluff, we knew, about these people not wanting accounts of their Belshazzar feasts written up in the papers."

As long ago as 1898, a book of etiquette laid down the rule that it was better to see a reporter than to order a servant to kick him or her out of doors. "If the errand is inoffensive," the pseudonymous author of *Etiquette for Americans* (Chicago: 1898) wrote, "remember that the

person bearing it is, after all, only earning an honest living in a disagreeable way." The advice on the toleration of newsmen or news hens was hardly necessary. At almost the same time Price Collier, a well-placed gentleman who viewed the social scene from the perspective of Tuxedo Park, New York, noticed "this evident love of publicity" which he deplored as "very bourgeois indeed".

The Edith Wharton and Henry James kind of society long ago disappeared from the news columns. There is a new elite, talented young men and women from the amusement world who have become celebrities because of their accomplishments and deft publicity. They possess no great fortunes, but they are attractive and amusing. If they entertain professionally at some high-level social event, they also mingle afterward as honored guests, while the names and pictures of the stars now appear in the *New York Herald Tribune's* carefully-edited party pages beside those of Mrs. Lytle Hull or the French ambassador. Notable for exercising an unusual restraint is Miss Angie Dickinson of the movies who has never hired a press agent and has said that she doesn't want the world to know it every time she says hello to the President of Bolivia.

## Illustrated Daily News

GERMANS BLOCK SIGNING OF TREATY

Newport to Entertain Prince of Wales in August



Reprinted by courtesy of The News, New York's Picture Newspaper

It is significant of the shift which has occurred that the first issue of the *Daily News* devoted its front page to a picture of the present Duke of Windsor sitting on a horse, captioned "Newport to Entertain Prince of Wales in August," while today the paper's social orientation is toward gossip of the night club and theatre: "Upstairs at the Downstairs girl-watchers got an eyeful when Shirley MacLaine, Chita Rivera and Monique Van Vooren ankked by on the same evening." And that iron man of Broadway and television, Ed Sullivan, makes his daily

omelet from such exotic ingredients as gambling news from Las Vegas, Orson Welles' gall bladder ("acting up in Madrid") or a romantic interlude between Alice Topping and Roy Cohn who are, or were, "blazing in Acapulco."

Far removed from the personalia of the Manhattan bistros, the staple social news across America has remained the wedding, frozen into a form so rigid that only the names and pictures need to be changed. The young girl ready for marriage is the center of American social life. It is a moment of social effulgence for the bride and groom and the newly-allied families. The spotlight is on the bride, her costume, attendants, the mother's costume, the father's occupation, if noteworthy. The community rating of the families can be understood by the knowledgeable reader without a glossary. The marriage ceremony will not be performed at City Hall but in a church, preferably a Protestant Episcopal Church. The contracting parties are likely to be listed in the *Social Register*. If one is not, it is a "mixed" marriage. If the families are not in the *Register* they share at least the outlook and position in life of those who are. If the grandparents of the bride were residents of New York City and pretty well fixed, that fact will be brought into the story which suggested to a team of sociologists who have studied the society pages of *The New York Times* "the recency and impermanency of any aristocracy."

The bride's ancestry, if linked with early American history, will get a thorough combing-over. Preference is given to colonial governors and Revolutionary War heroes. Her memberships in genealogical and patriotic societies will be listed. The specific gravity of the Colonial Dames is considerably heavier than that of the Daughters of the American Revolution. But one must watch for a trap here. There are two rival orders of Colonial Dames. Both are impeccable. But one is more impeccable than the other. The importance of Old Family, however, has recently been called in question.

According to young Mrs. Richard Savitt of New York, who had a year at Briarcliff College, the important things today among those who consistently maintain a high degree of visibility on the social scene are how one talks, dresses, handles make-up and the hair. "Family and that stuff," she says, "really doesn't matter today." This bulletin on the society woman as mannequin may have beneficial effects in saving ambitious families from committing improprieties in the hot pursuit of escutcheons. The invention of ancestors or their embellishment has in the past produced some classic blunders. The instance comes to mind of how one American family's vaulting ambition overleaped itself. These people installed a brass tablet honoring a reputed progenitor in a village church in England, only to have their genealogical monument exposed as spurious when an English family of the same name revealed that the plate bore the imprint of the manufacturer and the date 1879. Another cautionary tale in connection with the manufacture of ancestors attaches to an indiscreet Duc de Levis who hung in his gallery a painting in which the Virgin was depicted as graciously saying to his ancestor, who bowed before her, hat in



hand, "*Couvrez-vous, mon cousin.*"

If a New York bride is of social consequence, her parents will have multiple homes. Location is important. The town house, for instance, will not be situated in the Bronx. Country residences are subject to similar restrictions: Southampton, yes; Hampton Bays, no. The educational background of both bride and groom is part of the ritualistic story, provided that they attended private preparatory schools and the groom graduated from an Ivy League college. College background for the bride is permissible but not required. If she attended Vassar College that fact will be noted, often in the headline.

Information regarding the bride's debut is important, the date, place and auspices, if a public group affair, because some presentations are more significant than others. Provisional membership in the Junior League is also one of the marks of belonging. If the bride was presented to society at the Colony Club and the wedding reception was given at the Union Club, *The New York Times* will photograph the couple after the ceremony at its own expense and publish a two-column cut under a three-column head at the top of the page.

Despite the stereotyped character of the wedding story it is surprisingly revelatory. There in print stands a record from which caste can reliably be inferred. New York is not peculiar in this respect. Similar clues exist for other cities. In St. Louis the bride will have attended the Mary Institute and been a maid of honor at the Veiled Prophet Ball. If a Washington reception is held at the Sulgrave Club, if the bride has been presented at both the Debutante Ball and the Baltimore Bachelors Cotillon (spelled just that way) and if her grandmother honored her at the F Street Club, even the out-of-town papers will know that these nuptials are practically dynastic.

Certain contingencies sometimes arise in which a wedding is newsworthy, all right, but the city desk channels the story into the general news section far from the chaste pages concerned with "Family", as the *Los Angeles Times* calls it. For example, when Harry Leeb, a rich but little-known Chicagoan, who wears green-tinted glasses and a sharp, continental-cut suit, had his press representative distribute to the newspapers a release headed "Gray-Haired Prince Charming Gets His Princess at El Morocco", *The New York Times* was sufficiently impressed to send a reporter interested in sociology to witness the first marriage ever solemnized in the Champagne Room of the well-known night spot. There was a double-ring ceremony, *The Times* reported. The bride wore both rings, one a 20-carat diamond, the other an emerald which Mr. Thomas Buckley, *The Times* psychologist on the spot, declared "was just as green as and only slightly less noticeable than Lever House."

After the knot was tied, Mr. Leeb packed up his money and flew his bride and fourteen friends to Paris where the wedding party occupied a whole floor at the George V Hotel. To assuage any ennui which might occur in the City of Light, there were side trips arranged for everybody to emplane together for London, Rome or Majorca. Later, "alone at last", as Mr. Buckley expressed it, the Leebes cruised among the Greek islands in a chartered yacht.

The question of ostentation inevitably came up. Mr. Leeb had thought about that. He had two answers. First, he cited the practise of the rough-hewn capitalists of an earlier era who did not hesitate to let the lower orders share vicariously in their expensive adventures. And, like Pilate raising the philosophic riddle of the nature of truth, Mr. Leeb asked what, indeed, is ostentation?

"It's really not being ostentatious," he insisted, "because our normal way of living is on a comparable scale."

Mr. Merriman Smith, in his witty *The Good New Days*, provides an illuminating key to understanding the society sections of the Washington papers, which suggests how invaluable it would be if such interpretation was available for all major U.S. cities; for these pages have, as Mr. Smith says, "a language of their own; a language for which there is no Berlitz save experience."

"If a woman is *attractive, vivacious or charming*," the veteran United Press International correspondent explains, "chances are that she's a wee bit plain, fiftieth but important. To mention her *attractive silvery locks* means that she has one foot in the grave. To say that she has *prematurely gray hair* can be quite catty."

"Should a woman be said in print to be *ravishing or beautifully tanned*, her dress shunned everything. She was half-naked if the gown was *stunningly cut* . . .

"If a man is described as *courtly* or having *charming Old World ways* and a *still-erect figure*, watch for an obituary soon. He's on his last legs and . . . talks endlessly about Senator Borah and how they quit making good cars when they quit making the Reo . . .

"The experienced Washingtonian . . . also pays attention to descriptive detail. If the affair was *gay* . . . there was only punch . . . When the gathering was *tres gai*, things are looking up—a few got looped, others went on to finish the job at a quaint gin mill. The hosts were a bit above par . . .

"*Bubbling gaiety* is a dead giveaway. The writer may have been a shade socked-in. It was fun, though . . .

"Should an affair be referred to as *daringly different*, this may require inquiry. Either the decorations were shockingly bad or the historian dropped in on so many affairs the same day that he or she isn't too clear on detail. Or possibly, the hostess lived up to her not-so-public reputation."

The charity ball is a social fixture in which the pursuit of prestige or pleasure is justified because the event raises money for "good works". The costs of attending represent an attractive deal since they are tax-deductible. Such occasions have now taken the place of the big, expensive private party. For the lady who desires to escape from the "monkey fur" set and establish herself as an Old Guardswoman, the charity-ball gambit continues to be the best bet. Carefully-managed altruism pays off in a chance to meet the old families and ultimately in social recognition. The field is large. "Name a disease," goes the epigram, "and there is a ball for it;" or if a disease is not involved the benefit may be a fund-raising device for underprivileged children, the members of the Association of Former Russian Cavalry and Horse Artillery or for Wellesley. Often the gala is underwritten by a



cosmetic company, a furrier or whiskey firm seeking to trade up, if you will forgive the catchword, its "image". The admixture of fun and benevolence has become a folkway on all social and financial levels, so that one finds also the sisterhood of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees in Spokane, Washington, working for the Muscular Dystrophy drive while they play whist and exchange recipes for chicken curry.

The social gains which accrue in working for a given charity are very hard to assess. The names of the committee may be top-drawer, but sometimes they are only window dressing. A personal press agent, for a fee ranging upward from a hundred dollars a week, can spot worth-while opportunities, gently propel a client toward a fashionable charity, sometimes even place her on the committee. The committee meets to formulate plans. And names make news. The members deploy for the group photograph wearing their lady uniforms, pearls and identical piled-up hair-dos. And in due course the picture is published with a caption telling who is who. To become a social symbol a woman loaded with new money must really work at the tread-mill tasks and the cause must be carefully chosen. In New York it could well be the Judson Health Center or the Boys' Club. A good extension ladder into the social heaven in Chicago is the Art Institute or the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society.

The socially mobile family which actually undertakes the active struggle, must be able to grasp the subtle standards of the admired group and conform as to address, dancing classes, correct schools, an approved style of interior decoration, vacation spots and conversation. The successful aspirant quickly senses that one drives an old, beat-up Bentley or Mercedes Benz rather than a shiny new Cadillac. If her setting is Boston, she may own mink but will publicly express a preference for tweeds. She would be well advised not to attempt immediately to follow the example of Mrs. Jack Gardner in scrubbing the steps of the Church of the Advent during Lent, or appearing in Boston streets with a lion cub on a leash.

In Seattle, a small but conservative inner group keeps its nose to the civic grindstone. Service is the key word. An aspirant for social recognition in that empire of fish, shipping, timber and airplane manufacturing should be prepared to hustle for the Seattle Symphony, the art museum and the new repertory theatre, participating, if eligible, in organizations restricted to descendants of pioneers who arrived before 1870. This approach would not work in Philadelphia, where Biddles, Cadwaladers, Chews, Morris and Rushes were dancing minuets and quadrilles two hundred years ago. The way to mount the barriers in Philadelphia is, well—perhaps it would just be better to try some other city.

"I should not like to be a newcomer in Philadelphia," a member of one of the Old Families has said quite simply.

The lineal descendants of the shop girls who devoured the saucy tidbits in Bennett's *New York Herald*, the grand-daughters of the housewives from dullsville who quivered with excitement over the international mar-

riages of the late nineteenth century, still seek social gods to worship. There is a special satisfaction to be derived, in Edmund Wilson's phrase, "from imagining the enjoyment of glamour and power and from immolating oneself before . . . the dwellers in these privileged places."

Duchesses, countesses and Frank Sinatra pass in review in "Suzy Knickerbocker's" gossip column in the *New York Journal-American* where we can also eavesdrop on the luncheon-table chat of the Colony (the restaurant, not the Club). Mrs. Clarence Busch, "known as Polly to all" is—had you heard?—"a terrific photographer." The Countess of Camerana, who is married to Cinzano, the aperatif fellow, travels to Paris once a week to be coiffed because no one in Rome or Milan understands her locks.

"I don't know about you," comments Suzy, "but just knowing these things helps me get through my day."

Exactly. And who doubts for a minute but what these busy actors in the social pantomime, who are, in Professor Daniel J. Boorstin's pleasant phrase, well known for being well known, occasionally glance at the public prints, too, and live more successfully with their neuroses because they can exhibit press clippings about their glamorous selves and their "inty-inty friends." "People out here are lonely on a gala scale," according to Mr. Martin Manulis, the television and movie producer, commenting upon the social whirl in the Los Angeles area. "They have parties because they don't know what else to do with themselves. The big thing is to put up a tent and invite everybody you know."

With almost everybody in America having access to the good things of life like Ovaltine, dentures and *The Reader's Digest*, let us pray that the clever rich will grow richer still. Otherwise we may find that there is no one around to wear the new black sheath by Rodriguez and no one to describe the effect. What did Mrs. Perle Mesta whisper to Carol Channing when the stars of the entertainment world and Washington officialdom mingled so delightfully at Mrs. Mesta's party? The people have a right to know. Men, and especially women, need to believe in a land of Cockaigne where the escorts are rich, handsome and urbane, the women blond-tressed, where privileged couples have a home in Virginia, a castle in Ireland, a ranch in California, a purple helicopter and a luxurious yacht anchored in Florida waters while Hialeah is in action. These fascinating possessions of the very fortunate deserve the attention of some less acerb institution than the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

If the society page did not exist, it would be necessary to invent one.



(continued from page 7)

It was a world where needy veterans of a wartime army marched on Washington and were tear-gassed and shot by soldiers of the peacetime army; where so many people on the bum were hopping freight cars—a full million in 1933, of which 200,000 were children on their own—that the railroad police had to ignore the standing orders to remove and arrest them. It was a world where a whole farm might blow away in a cloud of dust and the farmer admit, in the words of Woody Guthrie, "*I swapped my farm for a Ford machine.*" With the Ford you could attain California and the privilege of working for pennies if the gun-toting Vigilantes permitted.

It was a world where the newly indigent were urged to rehabilitate themselves by selling apples on street corners, where men shuffled and stamped their feet on huge, winding breadlines. Every large city had its Hoovervilles, formerly empty lots filled with huts made out of worn-out linoleum, cardboard cartons and rusty bedsprings. You saw people sitting in the crazily tilted doorways to these huts, and you knew that they were starving.

Not all of this happened at the same time or all through the period, of course, but enough of it did, more than enough of it did. And what happened had certain consequences. As Louis Filler says, in his introduction to *The Anxious Years*:

"Never before was lip service toward 'The Star-Spangled Banner' more perfunctory. The Boy Scouts dwindled to a corporal's guard. The clichés of Religion, Home, Opportunity, Neighborliness were kept burning by lackeys, fools, and stipendiaries, while their parishioners struggled to recover a sense of their real relationship to their fellows."

The consequences for the student youth were even greater. Their lip-service had behind it far fewer years of practice, and many dispensed with it entirely. They had too many other things to worry about. At a time when strong, able-bodied men with developed skills, with years of experience, would riot at the announcement of "Help Wanted," at a time when some of the largest firms in the country announced they were no longer accepting any employment applications whatsoever, the youth of the country came to feel like alley cats in the presence of thousands of full-grown lions battling over a single piece of meat. They didn't stand a chance and they knew it.

The drop-out virtually disappeared as an educational problem. You might as well stay in school as hang around

the street corner. High schools and colleges—those without fees, or with extremely low ones—reported record enrollments. The doors of graduate schools were knocked at as beseechingly as they are today, but for a different reason: there was no place else to go, there was nothing else you could do with yourself.

If you were up with the humor of the period, you knew what to answer when someone asked what your diploma might be good for. "Oh, I'll be able to get a job in Macy's basement," you'd reply. The legend was that a B.A. was the minimum requirement now for sales personnel in the bargain basement; an M.A. or better was needed for the shoe and furniture departments.

Your professors, especially if they had tenure, were generally unconcerned with your petty personal economic worries. At best, they tended to be vague and gracious Wilsonian liberals. With all their learning, they could tell you even less than your parents could about the causes of the world's present ridiculous state.

But you might have a class under an oddball instructor who claimed to *know* and who offered interesting suggestions on exchanging disaster for utopia. He might be the faculty advisor to some strange campus group referred to only by its initials. Or you might make the acquaintance of an intense and highly articulate fellow student who told you excitedly that the instructor was an idiot and who would offer to sell you pamphlets at two cents each that would answer all of your questions. He belonged to another campus group.

Whichever group you investigated was usually a matter of the luck of the draw, and at first there seemed to be very little difference between them. The diagnoses were similar ("We are in the midst of the last of the recurring crises of capitalism."), the therapies suggested much alike ("Production for use and not for profit."), and the authorities cited being uniform, up to a point (Marx, Engels, Eugene Debs). The same growl of excitement was in all of these groups, the same kind of bright young people of both sexes, the same vocabulary and earnest humor ("Meet you on the barricades!"—"Of course the coffee in the cafeteria's bad: that's why we need a revolution!"—"Comrade chairman, your male chauvinism is preventing you from giving any women comrades the floor."). They were all willing to argue fine points of revolutionary theory far into the night, and they all dressed rather conservatively by today's campus radical standards—suits

with shirts and ties for the men; sweaters, skirts and either silk stockings or the distinctive bobby socks of the period for the women.

As you learned your way to the inside, however, you became aware of murderous political feuds of long standing based on the most delicate nuances of disagreement. Each group represented a special fraternity of the elect which was treading the one, the absolutely only path to the heaven of non-capitalism. The other political fraternities were composed of traitors and dupes.

Thus, frequently before you had decided on your own allegiance, you found it necessary to identify all your new friends in terms of the exact solution they proposed for the economic crisis. Were they NSLers or SLIDers? And after these two groups had united into the ASU, the question remained, were they YCLers or YPSLs? And if they were YPSLs (pronounced "Yipsels"), which specific breed of YPSL were they—Norman Thomasite or Leon Trotskyist? An Emma Goldman Anarchist might be safely introduced to your crowd, if he promised to behave himself, but you had to be more careful about a Jay Lovestoneite CPOer.

The NSL (National Student League) and the SLID (Student League for Industrial Democracy) were the campus manifestations of the Communist and Socialist Parties, respectively; they cooperated for the first time in the spring of 1934 to mount the Student Anti-War Strike. 25,000 students walked out of their classes and publicly took the Oxford Pledge ("I solemnly swear not to support the government of the United States in any war which it will undertake.").

In December 1935, the NSL and the SLID fused into the American Student Union, or ASU, distributing the offices of the new organization equally between leaders of the parent groups. Many of the Socialist officers of the ASU were converted by their Communist colleagues and, by the late Thirties, the ASU program very much resembled the Communist Party line.

While at its peak never boasting of more than 20,000 members, the ASU cannot be understood in terms of its modern counterpart, Students for a Democratic Society, which is so fervent about its lack of specific political ties. The ASU's influence, or at least the noise it made, was enormous. The *Student Advocate*, its magazine, was read by a large part of the student body. Its meetings were given substantial publicity by college newspapers and its

policies were debated at length in their editorial columns. College presidents received ASU delegations warmly, listening to their suggestions with respect. Eleanor Roosevelt addressed its mass meetings, and a young government official named Lyndon B. Johnson consulted regularly with its affiliate, the American Youth Congress.

Most important of all, the ASU could count on hundreds of thousands of students, high school as well as college, attending the demonstrations which were the high point of its yearly peace strikes. But as it reached for greater and greater influence on campus, certain amusing changes took place.

Bruce Bliven, Jr., described its fourth annual convention at New York's Hippodrome in the *New Republic*: "There were a quintet of white-flannelled cheer leaders, a swing band and shaggers doing the Campus Stomp ('... everybody's doing it, ASU-ing it') and confetti. There were ASU feathers and buttons, a brief musical comedy by the Mob Theatre and pretty ushers in academic caps and gowns. All the trappings of a big-game rally were present, and the difference was that they were cheering, not the Crimson to beat the Blue, but Democracy to beat Reaction. To me it bordered just alongside the phoney."

Beyond the ASU lay the youth organizations committed to a specific facet of the Left. Much smaller than the local ASU chapter, they fought for control of it through caucuses held prior to each ASU meeting. They were heavily pro-labor in orientation: the union organizer was the radical hero of the Thirties, and an idealistic student would spend his free time helping the CIO drive on Big Steel just as today he would devote it to SNCC or the Freedom Democrats of Mississippi.

Not that the student leftist of the Thirties was uninterested in the Negro problem. His interest was in fact most ostentatious. A Negro, now middle-aged, remembers his experiences as a freshman when, curious about radical politics, he casually investigated:

"All I had to do was stick my head in the door and someone would turn around and see me. Then he'd point to me and yell, 'There he is. I nominate him for chairman, whatever his name is.' I got to be chairman of more damn political clubs whose principles I didn't know the first thing about."

The YCL (Young Communist League) was usually the most powerful and—in the late Thirties—the largest of these political clubs. Incredibly small by any normal

campus standards, it loomed as a behemoth to the other, tinier groups. Not only did it come to control the ASU and similar "non-affiliated" outfits which had started out as the mutual property of the Left, but it had behind it the one daily radical newspaper in America—the *Worker*—and what was then the tremendous prestige of Soviet Russia, "the only place on earth where they are building a socialist state." There was as yet no rival church in Peking to threaten or criticize.

It numbered among its members or sympathizers martyrs to academic freedom like Morris U. Schappes, Howard Selsam and Granville Hicks, the last of whom had begun by being dismissed from Rennselaer Polytech as a radical and was presently literary editor of *The New Masses*—"in the days when it was read like the Bible," to use Malcolm Cowley's words.

While dedicated toil for the revolution was a paramount characteristic of YCLers, organizational looseness was not. Orders rumbled down from above as from a major-general's command post and any outspoken disagreement with Headquarters on New York's East 13th Street was understood by all concerned to be a request for expulsion. Were they not "the vanguard of the revolution?" Were they not "the soldiers of the future at war with the past?"

Murray Kempton in his book, *Part of Our Time: Some Monuments and Ruins of L'ê Thirties*, has written that "The Communist was the dominant radical type of the thirties, in the sense that the anarchist was the dominant radical of the nineties and the Socialist the dominant radical of the period before World War I." This was especially true in colleges where the YCLer—seen as a leader-in-training for the Communist Party—was a person of some note. He might rise in a history class to impart to the instructor a proper Marxist interpretation of the event being studied (prolonged and acrimonious debates between lecturers and lecturees were a unique feature of college courses in those years) and very, very rarely would he be told to sit down and shut up. His voice had the resonance of that decade's reality.

From places like Alcove 2 in City College's cafeteria, the Communist core would prepare leaflets for tomorrow's distribution, give instructions to the editors of the school publications or decide on the next play to be produced by the Drama Society. Their constantly growing power was the despair of adjoining Young Socialists, the envy of hungrily watching Trotskyists.

And there were so many girls among them!

While most radical college groups were predominantly male, the YCL had a very high percentage of female members. They were odd girls, it is true, like Anne Remington who anxiously asked her Dartmouth husband on the eve of their wedding if he was sure that he would remain a loyal member of the Communist Party. Or the Radcliffe girl who broke off with her Harvard boy friend because their love affair was not progressing according to the principles of dialectical materialism: "We've slept together a number of times, but our relationship hasn't deepened into a Leninist one. In other words, a change of quantity into quality has failed to take place." Or the girl described by Murray Kempton, who when someone suggested that she be more careful about her appearance, shot back angrily: "Millions are dying in Spain and China —and you ask me to wear lipstick."

Still, they *were* girls. And young men, hungering for female-companionship-cum-political-discussion had to face the facts of a radical campus song of the period:

*You go to a dance and look for romance*

*In a waltz or a mazurka.*

*You have a chance to catch a glance—*

*By reading the Daily Worker.*

The YPSLs (members of the Young People's Socialist League) had had more girls than the YCL in the early years of the decade—in fact, they'd had more of everything: money, literature and a proud tradition that went back to a period before Jack London and the great Socialist Party leader, Eugene Debs. But the Thirties were a time of increasing leftward polarity, and the YPSLs failed to hold their ground. At one point in the Thirties, there were three warring factions in this relatively minute organization, and each was publishing its own newspaper: if you were a YPSL, you had your choice of the *Socialist Appeal*, the *Socialist Clarion* or the *Socialist Call*.

For true connoisseurs of faction, there were the Trotskyists. The term itself is a matter of dispute. Though called Trotskyites by the entire Left, these followers of the famous Bolshevik intellectual kept insisting that the proper suffix for them was *ist*—as denoting a philosophical position rather than simple adherence to an individual. Nobody paid any attention to their argument, but at this late date they might as well have the suffix they wanted.

(continued)

1. a. OPA — Office of Price Administration. b. WLB — War Labor Board. c. WPB — War Production Board. d. OWI — Office of War Information. e. OSS — Office of Strategic Services. f. UNRRA — United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. 2. Willie and Joe. 3. The surrender of Italy. 4. Ray Milland in *The Lost Weekend*. 5. Russia declared war on Japan, August 8, 1945, two days after the dropping of the atomic bomb. 6. *Okla-homa* by Rodgers and Hammerstein. 7. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. 8. *The Robe* by Lloyd Douglas and *Forever Amber* by Kathleen Winsor. 9. Canasta. 10. Lord Haw Haw. 11. The Cocoanut Grove in Boston, Mass. 12. Clara Patacci.



*"For a brief moment, my whole life passed before my eyes. Gee, I was a cute kid."*



Trotskyist. And peace to their intricate souls.

For most of the Thirties, there were only a few of them on any given campus. But just as the Left as a whole had an impact on college life wholly out of proportion to its actual numerical strength, so within the Left did each Trotskyist seem to speak with the strength of ten, perhaps because their program was pure. "What the hell difference does it make," a Trotskyist was heard to shout in the course of a cafeteria argument, "whether your organization grows or not, whether it lives or dies—so long as your program is the *right* program!"

By and large tensely brilliant individuals, like their leader, they considered YCLers their special prey. "Why are you afraid to call another meeting of the Comintern?" they would demand of some startled Young Communist sophomore, as if he had been the one who all along had been holding Stalin by the elbow and saying, "No. Not yet." Almost any protest demonstration called by the YCL was likely to have circling on its fringes a thin counter-demonstration by the Trotskyists, demanding a protest on something else which was "the real issue." And if an outstanding YCL theoretician were rolled up like heavy artillery to debate the matter with them publicly once and for all, they would overwhelm him with the Irkutsk mining-equipment statistics of 1923 or refute him with quotations from a letter written by Friedrich Engels to a Manchester Labor union in 1878.

But after the Moscow purge trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938, in which Trotsky was accused of helping the Nazis establish a spy network inside Russia, the lot of the YCLer vis-a-vis these Trotskyist gadflies was much easier. He was forbidden to fraternize with them in any way, even for the sake of argument. "Comrade Saboteur-deviationist-bastard," a YCLer might say to the Trotskyist ahead of him on the stairs, "will you kindly allow me to pass?"

It was the Trotskyists who first called Stalin "Uncle Joe"—and the name stuck. Trotsky they referred to with a brief, pathetic pause after the definite article as "the—old man." They were a mad combination of hopeless Jacobite and well-schooled Talmudic quibbler.

This quibbling prevented them from ever achieving a noticeably large membership. Any time they were in danger of that, they solved the problem, amoeba-fashion, by splitting off a daughter-party. In the late Thirties, for example, someone called Oehler led a group out of the Trotskyists and set up his own party, known as the Oehlerites. A few weeks later, the Oehlerites split on a

complex theoretical issue—a man named Stamm walking out and forming the Stammmites. And then, a month after that, the Stammmites experienced a split. Only one man, really, but it finished the Stammmites. The man who walked out was the mimeograph machine operator.

Russia's invasion of Finland in November, 1939, divided the Trotskyists into two opposing halves. Trotsky insisted that the Soviet Union was still a worker's state and not an aggressive imperialism. Many Trotskyists in America disagreed with him and since it was these who prevailed in the end, the Left was treated to the astonishing spectacle of Leon Trotsky being in effect expelled from the American branch of his party for not being enough of a true Trotskyist!

The anarchists and Wobblies (members of the Industrial Workers of the World) were enjoined from the luxury of splitting: there were never enough of them around to make it possible. Their representatives on campus were few and far between and were looked upon benignly by the other parties as living fossils, as odd bits of radical ancient history which had somehow survived to the present. This, perhaps, is the role of the Young Communist (Moscow variety) in colleges today.

Many other groups were around at the time, the Lovestonites, for example, who seemed indistinguishable from Communists, but who insisted that their doctrines were separate and distinctive.

Radicals of the Thirties were much more doctrinaire than any radicals before or since. Doctrine was a thousand times more important to them than it is to the radicals of the Sixties. But rigid doctrine bred schism, and schism meant heresies. You went out of your way, quite elaborately sometimes, to avoid anyone whom your own group had stigmatized as a heretic. You didn't even argue with a heretic: if it was a sweetheart, you broke off the relationship; if you were married to one, you were expected to get a divorce. And if you were living with your parents and your kid brother joined an unacceptable schism, you were likely to tell your parents that either you or he had to leave home. The penalty for associating with a heretic was being denounced as one yourself. This was no light matter: it meant expulsion from one's political group and total ostracism by all of one's friends, an *auto-da-fe* in ice.

Many scars from these frozen flames had lingered to the present day—and are another major reason for the failure in communication between the middle-aged radical

and his younger counterpart. Insults still incompletely avenged and ancient snubs by no means forgotten lie between them relative to issues which ceased to be of moment twenty and thirty years ago.

These issues were socialism, the Soviet Union, and the role of Joseph Stalin. But the day-to-day questions were jobs, peace, and fascism—how to achieve the first two and prevent the third. A campus radical song of the period, to the tune of *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, is fairly typical:

*When we ask for jobs they reply they're no more,  
We know what employment they're saving them for:  
They want us to fight in some nice little war—  
Instead we will fight for ourselves.*

*Oh, they tell us the future is rosy,  
And they want us to thank them and bow,  
But we'd rather not wait until the time is too late—  
We want jobs and we want them right now.*

The bare bones of this kind of politics became even whiter and more distinct when placed against a youth protest song of the sixties, a carol sung by the Berkeley Free-Speech-Movementniks:

*Oh, come all ye mindless, conceptless and spineless:  
Sell out your integrity to IBM.  
Don't make a commotion—Strong wants a promotion—  
Oh, do not fold or spindle,  
Oh, do not fold or spindle,  
Oh, do not fold or spindle,  
Or mu-u-tilate.*

Putting aside the question of relative degrees of sophistication, the striking difference between the two songs is the harsh immediacy of the first and the complex cultural dissatisfaction of the second. It is the difference, in extension, between the Thirties' Soup Kitchens for the Starving and the Sixties' Full Employment Program. It is the difference between visualizing war in terms of the armless, legless, eyeless hulk of Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* or the bloody mud of *All Quiet on the Western Front*—and the discursive, high-echelon considerations of *Fail-Safe* or *Dr. Strangelove*.

One face worn by the enemy of the Thirties was fascism. Those incredible, strutting, gray-minded men whose jokes

were steel and whose laughs were copper now controlled Italy and Japan, Germany and Hungary. Their sympathizers appeared in New York, Paris and Nanking. Wherever they conquered, men of good will died rapidly, obscenely, labor unions were smashed, students were shunted from classrooms into close-order drill. "*Tomorrow, the whole world,*" they sang.

There was bitter disagreement among campus radical organizations on the subject of fighting fascism with bourgeois allies. Oswald Garrison Villard had called fascists "the armed hoodlums of capitalism" who were used by their masters to do away with the democratic apparatus of government when there was danger of leftist parties taking over the state. But he added that, once in power, they frequently did away with many of the capitalists as well. Was Fascism merely a new form of capitalism—as the Trotskyists and anarchists insisted—to be fought along with it while attempting to achieve The Revolution, or was it—as the YCLers maintained—a novel and distinct political development requiring the postponement of all revolutions until it was checked and destroyed? The Trotskyists pointed out that the YCLers on campus had only taken their present position when it became apparent that the main thrust of German fascism was to be directed against the Soviet Union. Suddenly, overnight, the YCLers were no longer calling the Social Democrat YPSLs "Social fascists," but "Socialist brothers" and were even trying to make friends with Young Democrats and Young Republicans. They sang a biting song of their YCL rivals:

*We're now a party with finesse—  
Our line's been changed again!  
With bourgeois groups we've coalesced—  
Our line's been changed again!  
Concerning war, we'll have to hedge—  
Our line's been changed again!  
We've disavowed the Oxford Pledge—  
Our line's been changed again!*

And relative to the sartorial and social changes among YCLers which the quest for respectable allies had brought about, they added:

*We must appear to be sedate—  
Our line's been changed again!  
The Revolution, it can wait—  
Our line's been changed again!*

*Bourgeois tricks we'll have to use—  
Our line's been changed again!  
Our women must not wear flat shoes—  
Our line's been changed again!*

But the German Communist, Karl Billinger, flung into a concentration camp and beaten mercilessly by Hitler's Brown Shirts, found himself sitting on a wooden bunk beside Social Democrats whom he had been fighting since the Spartacist Revolt of 1918-1920. As they all wiped the blood off their faces, they agreed that it should never have come to this; "Our leaders were scoundrels and yours were fools."

The lesson of Germany was studied in France—"That wonderful classic land," Odets called it in one of the earliest anti-Nazi plays, *Till the Day I Die*—and the Popular Front came into being.

In Spain, a Popular Front government—composed of Socialists, Communists, syndicalists and even republicans—was attacked directly by the Right. Using massive military aid from Germany and Italy and a suicidal "non-intervention policy" on the part of France and Great Britain, the fascists began a war which ended with their victory three years later. The loyalist government, for what it was worth, had legality and the conscience of most of the world on its side. But all it got was a trickle of supplies from Russia (many, many Russian advisors, however) and the International Brigade, with the Abraham Lincoln Battalion from America as one of the Brigade's components.

For once, the student Left in the United States was almost united. Never had there been an issue that seemed so spectacularly clear to all shades of radical opinion—and never would there be one again. Tactical differences were shelved: Spain Must Live!

Trotskyists and YCLers from college after college smuggled themselves across the Atlantic in filthy freighters so they could join the International Brigade and die with rusty rifles in their hands. The Gandhian non-violence of the Sixties was totally alien to student thought in the Thirties. Then, every campus radical knew of at least one friend who had fallen at Guadalajara or was fighting on the Ebro or was rotting in a fascist jail at Malaga. Anarchists, Wobblies, YPSLs, sent money and pathetic quantities of medical supplies to Spain:

*Oh, Spain bleeds for a world that would be free.  
Oh, Republic, No Pasaran!*

The men whose books students were reading at the time, the living writers they most admired, spoke at rallies along the academic circuit to raise funds for the embattled government of Spain, trying to overturn the non-intervention policy before it was too late. Hemingway told with bitter scorn how, every time the fascists were beaten in the field, "they salvage that strange thing they call

their honor by murdering civilians." Archibald MacLeish said: "The war is already made. Not a preliminary war. Not a local conflict. The actual war between the fascist powers and the things they would destroy, the war against which we must defend ourselves. . . . And in that war, that Spanish war on Spanish earth, we writers who contend for freedom, are ourselves, and whether we wish so or not, engaged."

And Murray Kempton, who was nineteen years old when the Spanish Civil War began, has written of it: "Spain was the passion of that small segment of my generation which felt a personal commitment to the revolution. For most of its members the greater war whose prelude Spain was came almost as anticlimax."

When Madrid finally fell in March 1939, boy and girl radicals sat weeping at tables in college cafeterias, ignoring the ROTCers who jeered at them and who jiggled newspapers with headline, "Franco Victorious" in front of their faces. Others got to their feet in the middle of a class and wandered blindly into the hall and down the stairs. Not too many, however, cried or cut classes. They were a "small segment" after all. The vast majority concerned themselves with problems like who they might be dating that night or how the hell to get their hands on the bio notes.

But even for that small segment, the Lost Cause had been lost two or three times over. The dream was full of rotting, dusty crepe paper and oddly cracked tinsel. For one thing, the unanimity of the Left on the subject of Spain had disappeared some time before the end of the republic. The Trotskyists and anarchists claimed that the Spanish government, influenced more and more by its Russian advisors, had brutally suppressed Franco's staunchest opponents. The YCLers said that the Trotskyite POUMists had mounted barricades against the Loyalist government and had tried to carry out a socialist revolution in the midst of the country's battle for survival. Both blamed the Spanish affiliates of the other for Spain's ultimate defeat. And since the defeat was a most bitter one to bear, the blame was thrown by huge catapults of hatred.

Only the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, to be signed five months later, would leave greater wounds and more permanent breaks.

Furthermore, the soldiers of the Lost Cause who returned to their campuses were a strangely bemused, remarkably unenthusiastic lot. A few came back nodding heroically: they demonstrated how to drink wine in the Spanish style and they told tight-lipped stories of the massacres they had witnessed. These had their pick of the girl leftists, their choice of high positions in their respective political hierarchies. But most of the men who came back from Spain were changed, changed utterly. They shuddered and made nauseated grimaces when asked about Carabanchel or the Jarama. As for the war itself—well, Sherman had known more about it than

Marx. Usually, they had switched political allegiances at least once while they were in Spain; sometimes they had meandered through the entire spectrum of the Spanish Left. And now? Now they were hedonists. Know of an easy lay, a quick buck, a fast good time? They'd take it.

They were, in other words, no different from the veterans of any war—just or unjust—at any time in history. But the shock on the campuses was great: it was as if a dedicated civil rightser of today had gone down to Selma, Alabama, to march behind Martin Luther King and had come back muttering that the police have a tough enough time as it is and we should all get behind them and try to observe the law.

All this time, the Far Eastern fascist power, Japan, was carving an empire out of China. Japan's major export was still silk, in a pre-nylon time. Therefore, the ASU exhorted its girl members:

*If you'd be in style, wear hose made of lisle:  
Don't buy anything Japanese.  
Lisle's three times as strong, wears three times as long:  
Don't buy anything Japanese.  
The fascist forces wage war in conspiracy,  
If we refuse to trade with them, we'll save democracy.  
That's why China begs, keep silk off your legs:  
Don't buy anything Japanese.*

And its girl members complied, heroically exhibiting the most uninteresting legs on campus.

Much was demanded of these girl members—and much they gave. When Negro students, mostly male, began to join the radical organizations in slight but significant numbers towards the end of the Thirties, the girl members were expected to give them priority in dates, "to make them feel at home," "to demonstrate our complete lack of prejudice," "to do what we can to diminish racialism on campus." At that time, it took courage for a white girl to be seen on the streets with a Negro date—even in the North. And it also took a hell of a lot of courage on the part of the Negro.

Girl members would sit, their skirts tucked demurely under, at the feet of ragged folk singers who were also beginning to drift into political meetings of the Left. Folk song was not to become a great American fad for at least another twenty-five years: its appreciation then was limited to young radicals, but its purveyors were the real thing.

Huddie Ledbetter would show up unexpectedly at a "social" of some left-wing campus club. The moment that big man with his twelve-string guitar came through the door, the president of the club might whisper to his girl, "Oh, my God. Leadbelly—and we don't have any sherry. Go down and buy some, fast. And make sure it's the Mission Bell brand!" Later, when the girl had returned and taken her place at Leadbelly's feet with the other girls, when Leadbelly had drunk enough to stop

strumming his guitar idly and begun to sing, he might give out with *It's a Bourgeois Town*. You can sit here, he would tell his audience, you can sit here drinking that Mission Bell Sherry Wine, but—

*The capital of your nation is a bourgeois town!*

Or Woody Guthrie. Woody Guthrie was well-known on many campuses, but only to the small segment, the radical few. For a time, he even wrote a column for the *Daily Worker*, but neither the circulation of that odd little tabloid nor his own singing seemed to benefit much from it. He had a slight awe of college students and would occasionally take guff from them he would take from no one else. Once, when he had sung *Jesse James* to an audience at a New York college, a fat and pompous fellow, a big man on the campus Left, rose to criticize certain aspects of the song's chorus—

*Jesse had a wife  
For to mourn all her life,  
Three children, they were brave. . .*

—as being too pessimistic. "Couldn't you make it a little, you know, a little more positive, Woody?" he asked. Woody thought about it, swinging his guitar around in a slow circle as he studied the matter. Then he nodded and picked up the instrument. "How's this?" he asked:

*Jesse had a wife  
Who was proud of her life,  
Three children, they were brave. . .*

And he never sang it any other way. Around the colleges, that is.



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# THE FORTIES QUIZ

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by Robert Thomsen

1. During the war years more initials turned up in the alphabet soup of Washington. How many of these can you identify?
  - a. OPA
  - b. WLB
  - c. WPB
  - d. OWI
  - e. OSS
  - f. UNRRA
2. What were the names of the two war-weary infantrymen created by Bill Mauldin in *Up Front*?
3. In the summer of '43 the headline "One Down, Two to Go" appeared in newspapers across the country. To what did it refer?
4. Suffering from the most monumental hangover ever filmed, this poor fellow made his way up Third Avenue trying to pawn his typewriter, but, it being a Sunday, he found all pawnshops closed. Who is the actor, and what is the picture referred to?
5. Do you remember if the Russians declared war on Japan before or after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?
6. But even such major world events could not completely shut out other absorbing interests. In New York returning GIs wanted two on the aisle for a new kind of musical comedy. It had no stars, no chorus line, but it did boast a ballet by Agnes de Mille. Remember it?
7. In the summer of '45 when a newspaper strike deprived New Yorkers of their favorite comic strips, the funnies were read over the radio by a prominent American. Who?
8. At the close of the war two widely different historical novels vied for first place on the best-seller lists: One was a story of biblical times; the other, a first novel, put great emphasis on the bawdiness of Restoration England. What were their titles?
9. Late in the forties a new craze, a card game, swept the country. Do you remember it? (*Not* gin rummy, that had been around for a while and is still being played, this was a bonafide new craze.)
10. And does anyone remember the radio name used by William Joyce when he broadcast for the Nazis?
11. In 1942 four hundred and ninety-two people -- including many servicemen -- were burned to death in a night club. What was the name of the club, and in what city was it located?
12. On April 28, 1945, Benito Mussolini was executed, and his body and that of his mistress were strung up by the heels in Milan. What was her name?

Answers on page 60



*(continued from inside front cover)*

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